THE Nation

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The Shape of Things

WHEN THE BRITISH RELINQUISH THEIR mandate over Palestine this week-end they will leave behind them a country disorganized and in civil war largely as a result of their own refusal to cooperate in setting up the partition plan voted last November by the U. N. Assembly. But partition is being carried out in spite of them, by force of Jewish arms, and a Jewish administration is ready to take over the functions laid down by the British in the areas allotted by the United Nations to the proposed Jewish state. Thus in one part of Palestine, at least, orderly processes of government will continue to the degree that the fighting and the liquidation of services by the British permit. The Jewish state comes into being under all but impossible circumstances; the least its erstwhile friends in the United Nations can do is to acknowledge its birth and give it prompt recognition and generous support, particularly in the shape of arms for defense. We call upon the United States to take the lead in this, both as an act of justice and as partial recompense for its abandonment of a cause it had led in sponsoring only last November. Partition exists; the Jewish state is declared; whatever other arrangements are made for Palestine, let these facts be promptly and legally acknowledged. Further uncertainty will only prolong the fighting and reduce the chance of stable and decent peace when the struggle ends.

*

THE EFFORT OF A NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN to amend the United Nations Charter so as to outlaw vetoes in the Security Council has been rightly discouraged by the Administration. The evident aim of the movement is to obtain a "real world government"—of only part of the world—by forcing the Soviet Union and its satellites out of the United Nations. Just how that would get us any farther along the road to one world it is difficult to see. The real trouble is not the veto but the will to exercise it, and the split which activates the will. You cannot mend a world broken in two by writing or amending charters. Let us preserve the U. N. and support it as well as we can—which is considerably better than we have done—as a symbol of our desire for a worldwide organization of peace. When Russia is ready to play ball on terms we will accept, and when we are prepared to respect vital decisions of the U. N., as we have failed most notably to do in the case of Palestine, the political functions of a world union can begin to operate. In the meantime, if any closer association of the Western democracies is achieved, it will be by other means than running off with the United Nations Organization. It takes time to build a nation soundly, to say nothing of an inter-nation.

*

PRESIDENT TRUMAN SAYS THAT CHILDREN and dogs are as necessary to the welfare of this country as Wall Street and the railroads. In this election year when nobody seems to want the candidates who want to be President, we shan't be surprised if the politicians, in their extremity, not only kiss the babies but try it out on the dog.

*

SUPPORTERS OF SENATOR TAFT APPEAR TO be genuinely relieved over the results of the Ohio primary, in which Harold Stassen received the first setback of his campaign. But the relief appears to be that of a condemned man who gets a reprieve rather than a commutation. There was a chance that the Ohio vote might put an end to Senator Taft's Presidential ambitions once and for all; indeed, it is likely that this is precisely what he feared. Instead, he is able to boast a victory of sorts. For while few will take seriously his claim that he now has more first ballots committed to him than any other candidate, he has clearly made a better showing than was expected against what passes for the *enfant terrible* of the Republican Party. The Stassenites may point out that it is, after all, no small achievement to go into a "favorite-son" state and on two months' notice deprive that favorite son of nine of his state's delegates in twenty-three contests. But Stassen had to do better than that, and he had freely predicted that he would. To go before the convention as the irresistible vote-getter, the spontaneous choice of the nation, he had at the very least to elect his candidate for delegate-at-large, the venerable Carrington Marshall. But with all his prestige as former Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, Marshall ran last in a field of ten. The net result of Stassen's risky enterprise is that he looks slightly less

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irresistible than he did, Taft looks as utterly resistible as ever, and Tom Dewey, taking his first nourishment in weeks, is talking hopefully about his "Cabinet."

*

LET US HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE Greek executions that have horrified Europe these past two weeks; they are plain atrocities without excuse or mitigation. The men killed had been in prison since the 1944 revolt. They were all leftists and members of the resistance; some were Communists but more were not. The offenses with which they were charged were committed during the occupation or in the civil struggle that followed the German retreat. Many were accused of offenses *against the German occupying forces*. After four years in prison these men are being marched out and shot in batches. The executions began immediately after the assassination on May 1 of Christos Ladas, Minister of Justice, but the Greek government says they are not reprisals. If not, what are they? Protest is mounting all over Europe; even the British government has asked Vice-Premier Tsaldaris for an explanation. But the United States remains silent. Our mission in Athens can issue "advice" on finances and how to lick the guerrillas, but apparently the niceties of non-intervention forbid any action to stop wholesale legal murder. We warn the State Department that the blame for this atrocious business will fall, not on the reactionary Greek government, of which nobody expects anything different, but directly on the United States. By its silent acquiescence it has gone far toward justifying the accusations of the Communists—and the despair of decent liberals the world over.

T. E. W.—Now or Never

THE most critical fortnight in the struggle to provide Americans with decent housing is before us as this special issue of *The Nation* appears. Congressional opponents of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill now enter the ring for what is undoubtedly the final round, and their in-fighting will be bitter and dirty, particularly in the Banking and Currency Committee and the Rules Committee of the House. This will not be surprising, for no legislation in recent time has been subjected to more ruthless attack than the General Housing Act.

There was the prolonged one-man strike against T.-E.-W. of Representative Jesse P. Wolcott, chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee through which the bill must be cleared. There was the courageous attempt in the spring of 1946 to discontinue hearings on the bill on the unheard-of ground that legislative hearings should not be held while Congress was in session! There was the maneuver last fall of Senator Joseph R.

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McCarthy that kept liberal Republican Senator Charles W. Tobey from the chairmanship of the Joint Congressional Committee on Housing, a post which was Tobey's due by cherished rules of seniority and precedent, and secured instead the appointment of the reactionary Republican Congressman Ralph A. Gamble.

And, finally, there was the interesting last-minute coup attempted by the real-estaters' friend, Republican Senator Harry P. Cain of Washington. Assisted by Wherry of Nebraska, the Republican whip, Cain proposed—at a moment when most of the Senatorial advocates of housing, including Robert A. Taft, were away from Washington—that the FHA home-loan mortgage-insurance program be extended for one year. The trick, of course, was that identical provisions are embodied in the T.-E.-W. bill itself, and while the private builders and building financiers for whom Cain speaks want to scuttle everything else in T.-E.-W., they crave continued donations from FHA. If Cain's "sleeper" legislation could be slipped through the Senate, the House might well kill T.-E.-W., using the Cain measure as an excuse. The scheme was plausible, slippery, and almost successful.

But the Senate, it appears, wants T.-E.-W. to be enacted and is willing to fight for it. Cain was out-maneuvered by a joint task force of Democrats and Republicans—Taft put in a word by telegram from Ohio—and his bill was beaten. The fight is now brought back to the crucial arenas of, first, the House Banking and Currency Committee, and then the Rules Committee, which must bring the bill to the floor once it has been reported out by Mr. Wolcott. Wolcott himself has declared he would not individually prevent the bill's progress, but late last week he grumbled that the Senate, in defeating Cain's measure, was forcing him to approve T.-E.-W. against his better judgment. It seems clear that any bill he finally reports will have had its vital public-housing provisions excised. In that case, once the bill gets to the floor, a fight will have to be waged by friends of public housing to get the provisions restored by amendment. They may not be able to do this until they can force a roll-call vote, which means until the bill returns to both houses after the joint House-Senate conference. If a roll-call vote becomes mandatory in the House, it is likely that T.-E.-W. will win: the greater the public pressure brought to bear, the surer the victory. In this respect it is important news, not widely known, that the leadership of the American Legion last week reversed its reactionary stand against housing described by Chat Patterson on page 546.

As part of the effort to pass T.-E.-W. we are sending this issue of *The Nation* to every Representative and Senator. Our legislators must realize that the time for housing is *now*, and that the people they represent will not patiently put up with another surrender to the real-estate lobby.

What Dictatorship?

THE Mundt bill, officially entitled Subversive Activities Control Act, 1948, which has been approved unanimously by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, is ostensibly designed to protect all the rest of us against a Communist dictatorship of the United States. Three questions are pertinent: (1) Do we need the protection offered? (2) Would the bill, if enacted, provide that protection? (3) Would it have any other consequences which would be less useful or pleasant?

The Mundt bill does not commit the absurdity of directly outlawing the Communist Party of the United States as a political organization seeking votes. That party shows no signs of being able to achieve its ends by electing its members to office. Not a single member of House or Senate bears or ever has borne its label. So far as we know, no executive or legislative body in the United States is in the slightest danger of being controlled by persons elected on the Communist ticket. And outlawing the party would not prevent Communists from supporting stooges under other banners.

What the bill does is to attack the Communist Party indirectly. Aside from outlawing any attempt to establish a totalitarian dictatorship in the United States under foreign control, it forbids any member of a Communist political organization to seek or hold office or employment under the United States government without revealing his membership, and forbids the government to appoint such a person. Communist Party members are forbidden to obtain or use passports. The Communist Party is instructed to file with the Attorney General a list of all its members, and all Communist or Communist-front organizations must register with him. It would be unlawful for anyone to join or remain a member of a Communist organization if he had not registered. Communist organizations must label their circular matter and radio broadcasts. They would not be entitled to tax exemption, and contributors to them could not make tax deductions for their gifts.

The bill in its language pays deference to the prin-

CORRECTION

The second and third sentences of Will Prices Go Down? in last week's issue should have read: "General Electric led this procession some weeks ago. Ford tried a price-cut last year, but found no imitators, and retreated from an advanced position." In the editorial as printed the mention of Ford was accidentally omitted, making it appear that General Electric had retreated from its price-cut position, which is not, of course, the case.

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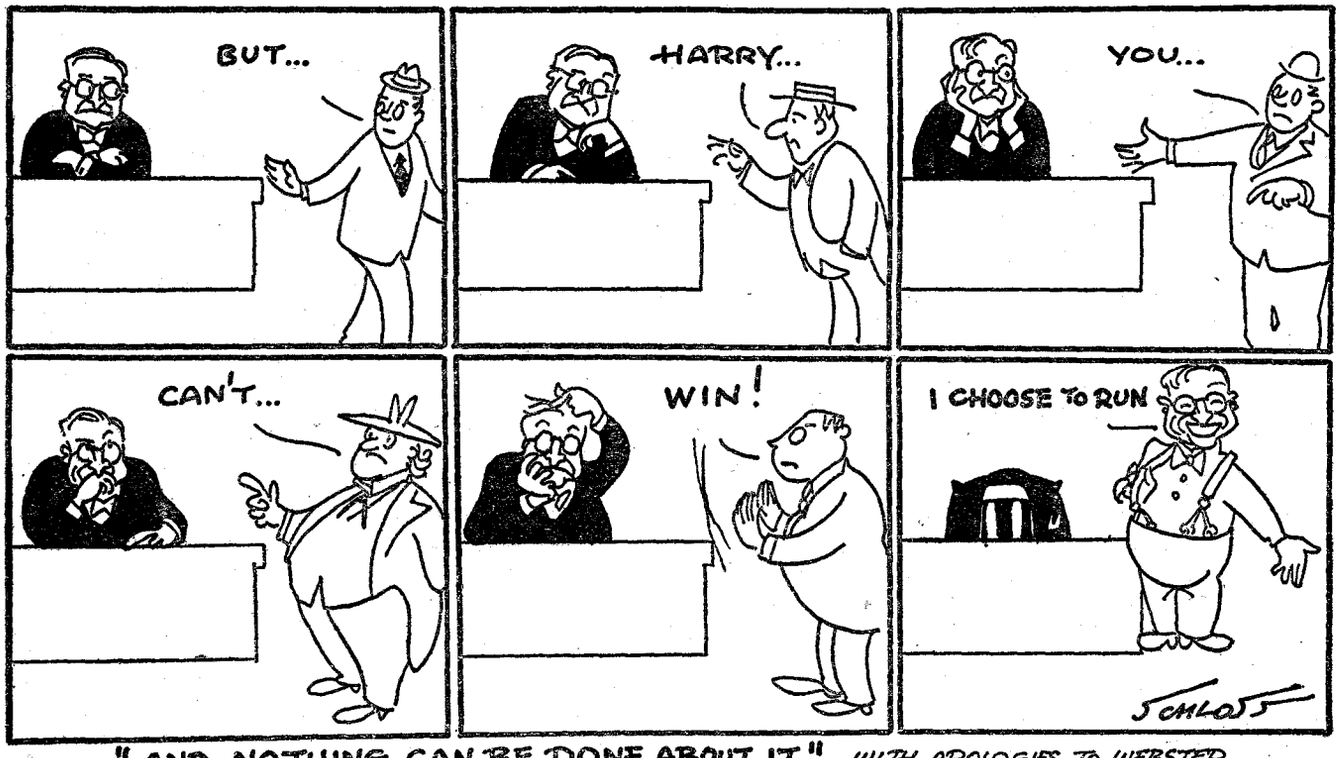
ciple laid down by Justice Holmes that civil liberties may be restricted only when there is a "clear and present danger" to the community. It states that the world Communist movement now presents a "clear and present danger to the security of the United States and to the existence of free American institutions." In an international sense this may be true, but how clear and how present is the danger from Communists operating in the United States? Certainly we need no new laws to save us from a dictatorship controlled by a foreign power.

The principal purpose of the bill is apparently to make Communists known. The theory is that the chief damage now done by Communists in this country is through their infiltration of other organizations, and that if the identity of Communists were made public, this danger could be dealt with. It is true that unions and many liberal organizations have suffered from Communist intrigue, and some of them have fallen under Communist control. Yet there is little difficulty in recognizing who the Communists are, under such circumstances. What advertises them is disciplined activity of a familiar type, following a well-publicized party line. It is naive to suppose that such activity could not be carried on if lists of party members were published. Either the publicity would make no difference, or the persons chosen to do the job would not formally be party members.

THE protection to American security and institutions offered by the bill is both unnecessary and negligible. But what about the danger to those institutions from the bill itself? Long experience has proved that some of the most un-American acts ever committed in this country have been the work of official or merely officious protectors of Americanism. The Committee on Un-American Activities has itself violated the elementary decencies of democracy, as did the Dies committee before it. The danger in such a bill as this is that vague language and prejudiced interpretation will be used against citizens exercising their basic rights.

If the bill were passed, the Communist Party would not submissively go out of existence. If it retained its name and legal entity, it would certainly appear under other guises as well, for specific purposes. There would continue to be doubt about what were or were not Communist or Communist-front organizations. Such a situation is an ideal one for the accusers and intimidators of reformers or others with unpopular ideas. The Communists would not be hurt by this confusion; the witch-hunters would have a field day; the only sufferers would be American security, democratic institutions, and citizens genuinely loyal to them.

We would humbly suggest to Representative Mundt and the members of the Un-American Activities Committee that there is about as much "present danger" of a Communist dictatorship in the United States as there is of a vegetarian dictatorship. If they really want to scotch the danger permanently, they might better adjourn for an indefinite period in order to study the report of the Commission on Civil Liberties and the Economic Reports of the President. If we can mete out social justice, do away with racial discrimination, check inflation, avoid any more severe depressions, and prevent war, the United States will have to find something besides communism to worry about.



"AND NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT" WITH APOLOGIES TO WEBSTER

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Roman Catholic Science

BY PAUL BLANSHARD

I. Relics, Saints, and Miracles

IN ITS relations with science the Roman Catholic church operates on three levels—the upper level, the priestly level, and the level of popular superstition. The priest acts as a mediator between the upper and lower levels, striving manfully to reconcile the extremes and keep them both under the roof of the one true church. His task is exceeding difficult. He is not a free agent and he does not operate under American controls. He must stand with one foot in the twentieth century and the other in the sixteenth.

The straddle between science and superstition is even more painful for educated American Catholic laymen. They tend to believe in science because they have been reared in the American atmosphere, and at the same time they wish to be loyal to their priests. Those priests, however, are directed from Rome, and Rome has given many hostages to medieval superstition. No American priest can be faithful to his trust unless he continually promotes and exploits practices which the educated Roman Catholic must consider little better than sorcery.

The Catholic novelist, Harry Sylvester, tells in "Moon Gaffney" how a sensitive and cultured young Catholic afflicted with paralysis is shipped away to Lourdes by his devout parents, who expect him to be cured by the waters flowing from the spot where the Virgin Mary spoke with Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. The young man is secretly so infuriated by his father's superstitions that he prays fervently that no chance circumstance will cure him. He would rather not be cured at all than to have his cure associated with such mythology.

Not many Catholics would go that far, but there are enough educated believers to put the priests on the defensive in their medievalism. The hierarchy is exceptionally sensitive about the charge that the church exploits the superstitions of the ignorant. Perhaps one reason is that so many people bring this charge. Millions of Americans oppose the Catholic church because it has not adjusted its scientific teachings to modern thought.

How much *has* the church adjusted itself? How much has it changed its attitudes and techniques since the seventeenth century, when it condemned Galileo for asserting that the earth moves around the sun, and burned Giordano Bruno for teaching similar doctrines with a little more pugnacity? Verbally it has changed a great deal. In encyclical after encyclical recent popes have proclaimed their devotion to science. If a student of the problem failed to note the qualifying phrases and conditions, he might easily believe that the church has always been the arch foe of superstition and the fearless champion of science.

There is no doubt that the church today accepts many of the *findings* of science which it once rejected, including the teachings of Galileo—although Galileo's books were not removed from the Index until 1822. Science is today lauded and "recognized" on all the top levels of Catholic life in the United States. The American Catholic universities have created many learned societies indistinguishable in their vocabulary from all the other learned societies. The Catholic laboratory technician is probably free to agree with his non-Catholic colleagues in respect to 90 per cent of their scientific conclusions.

But the Catholic hierarchy still does not accept either the method or the finality of science when the results of scientific inquiry conflict with priestly belief and practice, and every papal indorsement of science is made with this unspoken reservation. In fact, the fundamental theory and mechanism of clerical control over science are essentially the same today as they were in 1600.

THE theory behind the church's control of science is that all truth is divided into two grades, divine and human. Divine truth comes from God via the Roman Catholic church; human truth comes from finite reason, experience, and observation. Divine truth is *per se* infallible; human truth is always subject to correction by divine truth. If the two conflict, that conflict *ipso facto* proves that the supposed human truth is not truth at all but falsehood. Pius XII described the church's guardianship over truth in his encyclical on Christian Education of Youth: "Nor does she [the Church] prevent sciences, each in its own sphere, from making use of principles and methods of their own. Only while acknowledging the freedom due to them, she takes every precaution to prevent them from falling into error by opposition to divine doctrine, or from overstepping their proper limits, and thus invading and disturbing the domain of faith."

That is the *theory* for priestly control of science. The mechanism is arbitrary and authoritarian. In the Catholic system every judgment by a scientist or a philosopher concerning the nature of the universe, the relation of man to the universe, the institution of the family, or the

The two previous articles in Mr. Blanshard's new series were on the attitude of the church toward fascism and its censorship of books, magazines, plays, and movies. Its appeal to superstition and its position with respect to science will be discussed further next week.

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moral principles of conduct is subject to review and condemnation by a central commission composed of priests and presided over by the pope. This commission, the Congregation of the Holy Office, composed of eleven cardinals, acts wholly in secret and pledges its victims in advance never to reveal the facts or processes of their inquisition. It contains no American and is even more independent of democratic influences today than it was in the Middle Ages, for then the church occasionally held a General Council of the clergy. The modern Catholic church has held no such council in seventy-eight years, since the pope was declared infallible.

The Catholic writer, Joseph Bernhart, describes the vast powers of the Holy Office over the modern scholar in "The Vatican as a World Power," translated by George N. Shuster, Longman's, 1939, p. 417:

> The ancient palace of the Holy Office, which stands alone to the side of the colonnade of St. Peter's, still evokes the somber mood which has always been created by the name and the work of the Inquisition. . . . How many fall a victim to its spiritual inquiry no one can so much as guess, because even the Catholic who is summoned before it for some such purpose as to renounce an error is bound to maintain silence throughout life. Not only does the theologian engaged in teaching and writing stand under the supervision of the Holy Office and owe it an explanation for every departure from the prescribed teaching, but even the specialist in a profane science is under its jurisdiction. It may investigate the conclusions arrived at by an historian, or the system of a philosopher, a sociologist, or a political scientist, in so far as these touch upon questions of church law and social ethics. It opposes the biologist and geologist when they reach conclusions at variance with orthodoxy; it disciplined Galileo and threatened Columbus. The spirit of resistance to innovations that seem dangerous abides today, though the measures employed are different. . . . It is evident that the General Inquisitors of the Holy Office—they are still so-called—have a broad field in which to carry on their activities.

Although all Catholic scientists are subject to this Congregation of the Holy Office without recourse or appeal, they are in practice allowed great liberty as long as they do not encroach upon priestly preserves. Then the Holy Office may become firm and even vindictive. The penalty of excommunication and boycott faces any scholar in a Catholic institution who dares to disagree openly.

The general effect of this supervision is to create a special kind of ecclesiastical anti-science in the church which the educated Roman Catholic does not dare to criticize. The special effects of this anti-science may be summarized briefly as follows: (1) the system permits the continued exploitation of the poorer and more ignorant Catholic people by practices which have been described as medieval superstitions by nearly all other religious groups in the West; (2) it limits the physical scientist not so much by thwarting his research as by preventing him from drawing logical deductions from his data; (3) it imposes dogmatic restrictions upon Catholic social science, especially in the analysis of family and population problems; (4) it shades history in order to exalt Catholic accomplishments and conceal the devastating effects of clerical control in the past; (5) it makes the Catholic philosopher an underling of the theologian; (6) it reduces the Catholic universities to the lowest scientific level in American education.

THE most important and lucrative form of anti-science in the church is the exploitation of miracles and relics. Many non-Catholics imagine that relics are used by Catholicism merely as symbols of faith and devotion. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The church, even the American church of the present day, still operates a full-blown system of fetishism and sorcery in which physical objects are supposed to accomplish physical miracles. Sometimes it is claimed that these physical objects also accomplish spiritual miracles and change the destiny of any fortunate Catholic who relies on them.

I have before me as I write a four-page circular called "The Scapular Militia," issued in 1943 by the Carmelite National Shrine of Our Lady of the Scapular of 338 East Twenty-ninth Street, New York, and bearing the official imprimatur of Cardinal Spellman. Emblazoned on its cover is the specific guaranty in heavy capitals: "Whosoever Dies Clothed in This Scapular Shall Not Suffer Eternal Fire." Originally a small pocket on the back page contained a small cloth scapular to be tied about the neck of a member of the armed forces. The circular cites the miraculous effects of the charm in protecting Franco's soldiers from death in the Spanish war.

The scapular itself is free, but at the end of the circular is the suggestion: "Donations to support the Scapular Militia will be gratefully accepted." An inside page contains the precautionary statement:

> A scapular is not a talisman. It is not a rabbit's foot. It is the sign of devotedness to the Blessed Virgin, just as the carrying of your mother's picture in a fold of your wallet would be a sign of your devotedness to her.

Actually scapulars are not so important as relics in the Catholic system of sorcery. True relics of Jesus and the saints are entitled to veneration if properly approved (Canon 1283), and no limit is set upon their miraculous power. Officially they cannot be sold, but they can be systematically exploited by the faithful for their own profit and the benefit of the clergy. To avoid the charge of exploitation the church solemnly declares that it "does not guarantee the genuineness of a single relic," but it continues to give "episcopal authentication" to thousands ("Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary").

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Miraculous relics first appeared in the second and third centuries of Christian history when individual Christians began to keep parts of the bodies of martyrs and carry them about as talismans. The church soon yielded to the new superstition and gained enormous indirect profits from the relics industry. Graves were rifled and bones of the martyrs sold for large sums. New supplies of relics began to appear miraculously. The alleged discovery of the cross produced a whole crop of "miracles," and as the Hastings "Encyclopedia of Religion" points out, "a few years later the holy wood of the cross had almost filled the whole world." According to Paulinus, the part of the cross kept at Jerusalem gave off fragments of itself without diminishing. Thousands of holy garments and portions of bodies of the saints also began to appear, the coat of Jesus being exhibited at Trèves, the holy shroud at Turin, and the swaddling clothes at Aachen. By the time of the Reformation there were embarrassing duplications. Calvin discovered that he had been kissing a stag's bone when he had thought he was kissing the arm of St. Anthony, in Geneva, and that the supposed brain of St. Peter, kept at St. Peter's altar, was actually a pumice stone.

> It is almost incredible [he said] how the world has been cheated. I can mention three foreskins of our Savior's circumcision, fourteen nails exhibited for the three driven into the cross, three robes for Christ's seamless garment over which the soldiers cast lots, three spears by which our Savior's side was pierced, five sets of linen cloths in which his body in the tomb was wrapped.

The relics industry in the United States has been more carefully regulated than in Europe, but it would be erroneous to imagine that it has been eliminated. In fact, it has been stimulated by two official practices of the church—the creation of new saints and the use of relics in building new Catholic churches. "It is necessary for the valid consecration of an altar," says the "Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary" (imprimatur of Cardinal Hayes), "whether fixed or portable, that it contain, sealed into the sepulcher, relics of at least one martyr."

Although relics themselves cannot be sold, there is a brisk trade in articles associated with certain relics. In the New York *Catholic News* of September 20, 1947, appeared a large advertisement, with reproduction, of a "photograph" of Jesus taken from the Holy Shroud in Turin, with this written guaranty:

> The negative from which this photograph was made lies in the Holy Shroud and was developed in the Tomb during the hours Our Lord lay there before the Resurrection. The urea vapors emanating from the body acted on the aloes within the Shroud, creating the indissoluble pigment, aloetin, which was absorbed by the Shroud linen, thus forming the True Image of Christ. . . . The Official Vatican Newspaper says: "Twenty centuries ago the Apostles saw and kissed this same living Face."—Mons. Aureli, director, *Osservatore Romano*.

For my $2 check International Religious Art of 287 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, sent me "the True Face of Christ from the Holy Shroud of Turin." An accompanying letter dated October 7, 1947, said:

> As copyright owners in the Western Hemisphere we pay a royalty to the Official Photographer of the Holy See, Cav. G. Bruner, and to the Prince Archbishop of Trento, Italy, and these funds are for the rebuilding of the College of Priests and the Cathedral in Trento, which were severely damaged during the war. . . . We can ship these to you for $18 per dozen.

FOR many years the Western Hemisphere had a shortage of relics, but this deficiency is being rapidly eliminated by the device of creating new saints. Pope Pius XII created eight new saints in the first seven months of 1947; Pius XI had at least 531 beatified and at least 31 canonized, including 136 English Catholics, martyrs of Protestant persecution. Through a curious oversight the popes did not canonize a single United States citizen until 1946, and the one then chosen—Mother Cabrini—was born in Italy. In view of American Catholicism's new financial and moral importance in the church, this neglect is likely soon to be remedied.

The present machinery for creating saints by beatification and canonization is based upon a definite mathematical plan for miracles. As Joseph Bernhart points out in describing the church's machinery for creating saints (p. 424 ff.), beatification comes only after a petition has been submitted to the proper authorities showing saintliness and "at least two miracles *after death*" (italics mine). After an "investigation," made entirely by Catholic devotees, and after beatification, which confers only limited and local sainthood, the saint may be canonized and thus become the object of universal veneration in the church. This final honor is attained only if the saint's relics or spirit have performed *new* miracles after beatification.

The manufacture of a saint is a prodigiously expensive business and is surrounded with much formality and fuss. Religious orders, particularly hospital orders, frequently go about the business of saint-making with gusto, since a saint and shrine are very effective devices for money-raising. Recently the Institute of Gray Nuns of Montreal, for example, initiated a movement to canonize the foundress of the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Montreal. They went back forty-seven years to discover a miracle achieved by the candidate-saint after she was dead. Eight nuns, priests, and Catholic doctors came to Montreal and appeared as witnesses with counsel before a tribunal headed by an archbishop in the effort to "prove" this miracle—a cure in a case of pulmonary tuberculosis. The tribunal held twelve ses-

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sions and prepared a 200-page dossier "which the Vice-Postulator will take to Rome, where the Congregation of Rites will examine the evidence and decide whether the reported miracle will be admitted" (*Catholic News*, January 8).

In New York the tomb of Mother Cabrini, according to *Ave Maria*, draws almost 10,000 visitors a day, and in Chicago the nuns who belong to the order which Mother Cabrini founded have recently announced a $4,500,000 addition to their Columbus Hospital, "containing a national shrine to Mother Cabrini."

The Carmelite priests who work with alcoholics have also decided that a saint and shrine would be useful in financing and advertising their work. They have set out to gain the canonization of a Dublin alcoholic named Matt Talbot, who after sixteen years as a drunkard reformed and became a saintly social worker. He died in 1925. The case for his beatification was forwarded to Rome last year and is now pending. In anticipation of ultimate success, the Carmelite priests have begun collecting his relics for transportation to the United States. They have already obtained, according to the *Catholic News* of September 27, "fragments of his clothing, the ruler he used as a workman in the Dublin lumberyard, portions of the wooden pillow which he used on his bed, and finally even the famous iron bed in which he slept." "Since Matt Talbot has not yet been canonized," says the *Catholic News*, "the relics may not be exposed in a church, but have been assembled in a room called 'The Matt Talbot Museum' at the National Offices of the Matt Talbot Legion in Englewood."

When a shrine becomes very famous because of its relics, the Catholic Travel League organizes pilgrimages to it. The shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré, twenty-one miles from Quebec, had 875,932 visitors last year, half of them from the United States. Since the shrine's establishment in 1658 there have been nearly twenty million visitors and pilgrims, and more than half a million Masses. If each visitor spent only $2, the total would be nearly $40,000,000.

Although two French towns claimed all of St. Anne's bones in the Middle Ages, one turned up in Quebec in 1870. A cardinal presented "the wrist bone of St. Anne" to the shrine, and a monsignor brought it across the ocean with much ceremony and placed it with "the finger bone." Nobody knows who the mother of the Virgin Mary was. Nobody knows where or when she was born, lived, or died. Nobody knows where she was buried. She is not mentioned in the Bible. "The Biographical Dictionary of the Saints," by the Right Reverend F. G. Holweck, imprimatur of the Archbishop of St. Louis, admits, p. 79, that "not even the identity of her name is firmly established." The statistics do not say how many Catholic scientists go up the steps of St. Anne de Beaupré on their knees in veneration for the bones of the mother of the Virgin Mary.

London Notes

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

April 21

BEFORE I left New York, some of my English friends had written to me that I would find my native country in a very sad state. Austerity, they said, was making life nearly intolerable: people were undernourished, low-spirited, nervous, and irritable. My first impressions do not confirm these gloomy reports: on the contrary, Londoners seem to me in some ways to be rather more relaxed and cheerful than New Yorkers.

Outside the worst hit areas the city is beginning to take on a fairly normal appearance. There is peace, albeit a disturbed and precarious one, and that affords some relief to people who for so long were in the front line. With memories of the blitz still so vivid, it is hardly surprising that nobody here discusses the next war the way everyone in New York does. Chatting today with Kingsley Martin and Aylmer Vallance in the *New Statesman and Nation* office, I remarked on the absence of war talk and said that I found the atmosphere pleasantly relaxed. "The fact is," Martin explained, "that for us another war is just unthinkable. I can't help believing that Americans indulge in speculation about war as freely as they do just because they are not completely terrified by the idea. They feel there is at least a chance that it will be fought at a distance, but here we know that another major conflict means obliteration for most of us and the final destruction of Britain. We must assume, therefore, that war will be avoided in order to keep sane and get on with our jobs."

If this interpretation is correct, British phlegm merely hides a fear of war that has been deliberately thrust into the deeper recesses of the mind. Or perhaps the cheerfulness that appears at least on the surface is a response to a remarkably sunny and beautiful spring. April this year is for once living up to Robert Browning's publicity, and there have been blue skies and sunshine day after day.

Food is a constant topic of conversation. The visitor from abroad doesn't do so badly: eating in hotels and restaurants he can get enough calories. But basic rations of staple foods are as low as they have been at any time

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since 1939. They are just sufficient, my friends tell me, for nourishment when supplemented with non-rationed foods such as fish and vegetables, both of which appear to be fairly plentiful. Nevertheless, the task of the housewife in contriving appetizing and well-balanced meals is a formidable one when a week's meat ration for a family of four will make only one square meal and allotments of other high-protein foods are extremely meager. Several people have said to me, "We are lucky because we get parcels from America now and again; we don't see how those not so fortunate manage."

There are some unrationed luxury foods which sell at prices only the rich can afford, and there is some seep from the farms into the black market. But on the whole the principle of "fair shares" applies, with the extras going to the children. Certain kinds of fruit are reserved for them, and they all get daily milk at school. A great many children are given a hot midday meal, which is additional to the ration. Some of my Tory friends, however, have been unwilling to admit the benefits of the children's food program. Two of them, on successive days, told me they had heard that much school milk was wasted: children refused to drink it, and it was poured down the drain. "Who told you that?" I asked one of them. "Somebody standing next to me waiting in line at the butcher's," she replied. It is a typical example of the yarns that become elaborated as they pass from mouth to mouth: some undoubtedly are spread by anti-government propagandists.

April 24

Among the current best-sellers, prominently displayed in many London bookstores and on the larger newsstands, is a bright-colored threepenny (five cents) pamphlet printed by His Majesty's Stationery Office. This is the popular edition of that rather formidable white paper, Economic Survey for 1948, which I discussed in *The Nation* of March 27. It sets forth in non-academic language the salient facts about Britain's current position and illustrates them with graphic charts. Why must imports be pared down to a minimum? Why must exports be pushed at the expense of domestic consumption? Why must personal income be restricted and taxation maintained at a high level even though the budget shows a large surplus? To these and other vital questions the "Short Summary" provides answers that can be understood by the man in the street.

When I visited the Director of Publications of the Stationery Office today, I asked about the circulation of his pamphlet. In a few weeks, I was told, 425,000 copies had been sold and a total distribution of at least 500,000 was expected. That, I think, is a tribute to the political alertness of the public in this country. It is one of many indications of an almost passionate desire to learn about and understand national economic problems.

The "Short Summary" is a product of the Economic Information Unit which, since Sir Stafford Cripps succeeded Hugh Dalton as Chancellor of the Exchequer, has been functioning at the Treasury. Cripps attaches the greatest importance to popular education in economic matters. Planning in a democratic society, he feels, must depend on a minimum of compulsion and a maximum of voluntary cooperation, which will only emerge if the public thoroughly appreciates the government's aims and the obstacles it has to overcome. Hence among the most vital of the government's tasks is the publication of information in a form that makes it available to the widest possible audience.

In connection with this task, the Treasury has begun a campaign to improve official English and to eliminate from both government publications and correspondence what Maury Maverick once called "gobbledygook." Its opening gun is a little book called "Plain Words: a Guide to the Use of English," written by Sir Ernest Gowers, a retired civil servant with a varied experience in Whitehall. The author's purpose is to help civil servants say what they mean in simple, concise, and unpretentious English, and most of his examples of good and bad usage are taken from recent official documents.

Sir Ernest Gowers's approach to this subject is characterized by both humor and humanity. He emphasizes the point that "the efficiency of government, central and local, depends to an ever-increasing extent on the ability of a large number of officials to express themselves clearly." However, he says, " 'efficiency' must be broadly interpreted. It connotes a proper attitude of mind toward your correspondent. He may not care about being addressed in literary English, but he will care very much about being treated with sympathy and understanding. It is not easy nowadays to remember anything so contrary to all appearances as that officials are the servants of the public; and the official must not try to foster the illusion that it is the other way round. So your style must not only be simple but also friendly, sympathetic, and natural, appropriate to one who is a servant not a master."

The more rabid right-wing critics of the Labor government are prone to sneer at its members as a collection of arrogant *Gauleiters* who deliberately encourage their minions to stamp on the people's faces. Actually, the ministers are well aware that expanding government functions make it necessary to increase safeguards against bureaucratic practices. With a view to improving public relations and cutting red tape, departments are overhauling their methods. To take one example, the Foreign Office has recently decided to issue passports, formerly obtainable only from special offices in London and Liverpool, through all the hundreds of Labor Exchanges. As a result, a great deal of clerical work is avoided, and applicants can now get passports in their own districts on twenty-four hours' notice by filing a simple form. Will the State Department please note!

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April 30

For the past two weeks the British Labor Party has been engaging in one of those public washings of dirty linen which most democratic organizations seem to find unavoidable on occasion. It has been an unpleasant business for everyone concerned except the Tories. Nevertheless, members of the Labor Party in and out of Parliament believe the episode will not permanently damage the essential unity of the party.

Among those M. P.'s not personally involved the commonest reaction I have found is one of exasperation all around. The promoters of the famous telegram to Nenni, it is felt, were deliberately stirring up trouble, and many of those who allowed the use of their names are regarded as most irresponsible. On the other hand, the party's National Executive and its secretary, Morgan Phillips, are criticized for handling the situation with a rather Prussian clumsiness. And a very special measure of condemnation has been reserved for Captain Raymond Blackburn, Labor member for a Birmingham constituency, who turned a party imbroglio into a parliamentary row by hastily putting down a resolution calling for a select committee of the House to investigate the methods by which signatures for the Nenni telegram had been collected. This is not the first time Captain Blackburn has played into the hands of the opposition, and many of his colleagues would gladly see his head follow that of John Platts-Mills, M. P., into the executioner's basket.

Even fairly leftist critics of the party machine have, I find, little sympathy for Platts-Mills, who organized the Nenni message. The general opinion seems to be that if he is not actually a member of the Communist Party he behaves in all essentials like one. Of the original thirty-eight signatories to the telegram, sixteen have either denied they authorized the use of their names or have said they signed under a misapprehension. Each of the remaining twenty-one, excluding Platts-Mills, has received a letter from the National Executive Committee requiring him to "desist in future from such conduct" or suffer exclusion from the party. They are a rather mixed bunch: some young intellectuals, some former stalwarts of the old Independent Labor Party, a few veteran trade unionists. How they will respond to the party ultimatum is not known at the time of writing; presumably that will depend to some extent on what support each individual receives from his constituents. One M. P. I talked to last night—a man not entirely unsympathetic with the rebels, though he wisely refused to sign the telegram—thought that most of them would give the required undertaking but in terms that reserved the right to be critical of government and party policy. But that really is not the issue. No Labor member who as an individual had expressed the view that support of the Saragat Socialists by the party officials was a mistake would have been liable to discipline. The condemnation of the Nenni telegram was due to the fact that it represented an organized attempt to thwart both government and party policy, timed to have the maximum effectiveness.

[*This is the first of Mr. Hutchison's letters from London and the Continent. Next week he will report from The Hague on the Congress of Europe.*]

Anglo-American Rivalry in Siam

BY ANDREW ROTH

Bangkok, April

FIELD MARSHAL PHIBUN SONGGRAM, the "strong man" of Siam and its war-time military dictator, is assiduously studying English. The flexible Marshal began to learn the language when he was imprisoned briefly as a war criminal, and he has continued to study it since he overthrew the Thamrong government in November, 1947. Some people in Bangkok are speculating whether he will speak with a British or an American accent.

On the surface Anglo-American relations in Siam are cordial. Members of the diplomatic and business communities of the two nations mix amiably in the pool and on the tennis courts of the Royal Bangkok Sports Club. But beneath the surface a struggle is going on for Siam's rich exports. To the British Siam is an economic preserve to be defended with every resource; to American business men it is a new and fruitful field which they are exploring with mounting enthusiasm.

Before the war Siam was the only independent country in Southeast Asia—a position which it managed to maintain by playing off Britain against France. But so far as its economic relations with the outside world were concerned, it was virtually a British colony. All Siam's external loans were held in London. Tin and teak concessions were a virtual British monopoly. Some 70 per cent of its export-import trade was with the British Commonwealth. With all its exports funneled through the ports of Penang and Singapore, its economy was

ANDREW ROTH has been nearly two years in India, Burma, Indo-China, and Siam. He is now moving on to Indonesia, and his next article will deal with the nationalist movement in the islands under Dutch rule.

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closely bound to that of British Malaya. Malaya consumed most of the rice, but the tin and rubber were largely reexported to the United States. For these products the Siamese received sterling credits, but when they were reexported Malaya received dollar credits. It was Siam's rubber and tin which helped win for Malaya the title of "dollar arsenal of the British Empire."

In challenging Britain's monopoly of Siam's exports the United States has derived some advantage from its more lenient attitude toward Siam's participation in the war on the side of Japan. The British considered Siam a full ally of the Japanese; the United States took the position that Siam had acted under duress. Washington recognized the "Free Thai" movement headed abroad by Seni Pramoj, then ambassador in Washington, as a sort of Siamese government-in-exile and toward the end of the war worked closely with the "Free Thai" underground movement headed by the Regent, Nai Pridi Phanomyong, or Luang Pradit. The British also worked with anti-Japanese elements within Siam but not so extensively or wholeheartedly. At the end of the war Britain planned to treat Siam as an enemy country to be occupied by Germany or Japan. The Siamese, making use of the friendly relations built up during the war, took up the British demands with the United States, and as the result of American pressure the terms were modified.

BRITAIN'S economic decline, coupled with the more sympathetic American attitude, has enabled American interests to make a major penetration here. Whereas before the war there were only two American firms in Siam, now there are several dozen, some openly American, others camouflaged with Siamese names. Bangkok is now a major stop on the round-the-world service of Pan-American Airways—which has outstripped B. O. A. C. here—and is the hub of several smaller American lines. One of these, Trans-Asiatic Airlines, was started in 1946 in the Philippines by five veterans with $18,000. Spark-plugged by William Davis, the son of a Standard Oil executive, the group bought a used C-47, and by flying cargo with it an incredible number of hours and getting a few lucky breaks, built a handsome little business network covering the Philippines, Hongkong, and Siam and made a net profit of over $300,000 in 1947.

Some of the breaks were extremely lucky. Davis made Admiral Luang Thamrong an officer of his corporation a few days before Thamrong became Prime Minister. When Siam refused to let Philippine planes land here because the Philippine government had not granted reciprocal landing rights, Trans-Asiatic Airlines, with one plane registered in the Philippines and another in Siam, could still fly people between Manila and Bangkok by transferring them from one plane to the other at Hongkong. Now T. A. A. is operating seven planes between Bangkok and Manila. On the basis of this initial success, its twenty-five-year-old president has built up a number of other enterprises—advertising, export, and import. When the military coup of last November pushed Admiral Thamrong out of the Premier's post, Davis was unworried. One of his Siamese partners is a son-in-law of Marshal Phibun, now commander-in-chief of the army.

Another indication of growing American influence is the success of the Bangkok *Post,* edited and published by Alexander MacDonald, who came here first as a naval officer attached to the Office of Strategic Services. MacDonald had been a newspaperman in Hawaii for many years and written a book, "Revolt in Paradise," which exposed the control of the Hawaiian Islands by the interests known as the "big five." When he learned that a rotary press installed by the Japanese was available in Bangkok, he decided that here was his chance to realize his ambition of being an editor and publisher. He is offering strong competition to the other English-language paper, *Liberty,* which features British news.

AMERICAN efforts to gain control of Siam's exports are being carried on under the generalship of James T. Scott, United States commercial attaché. Formerly the United States got all its Siamese rubber and tin through Malaya, but it is now getting a considerable portion directly. And the giant Anaconda Copper and Tin Company, after two years of waiting, has recently had its application for mining rights approved "in principle." The actual lease-hold is expected to be granted soon, and the monopoly of British and Australian companies will then be ended. Direct American-Siamese trade in rubber is still facing difficulties, but with Siamese exporters eager for dollars it is likely to increase. The greater part of Siamese trade is carried by British ships, though some rubber and tin ore is sent to the United States in American ships.

In the last twenty months rice has netted Siam some £14,000,000 in sterling credits. America has just bought $5,000,000 worth for China relief, and purchases by the Philippines and South Korea have also brought in dollars.

The government set up after the November coup d'état with Khuang Aphaiwongse as Premier is pro-British in sentiment, but the Siamese seldom let sentiment interfere with business, and the need to move farther into the dollar orbit is recognized. All Siam's foreign loans are now held in London, but Premier Khuang told me that he hopes to obtain an American loan to modernize the country. It was his Cabinet which acted favorably on the application of the Anaconda Company for the right to mine tin. The Assistant Minister of Finance, Kukrit Pramoj, who was educated in England, said that to move into the dollar orbit is "simple common sense." "The pound sterling could buy anything in the pre-war days," he said, "but dollars can now buy more of what we need."

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Del Vayo—Germany the Winner?

Paris, May 3

THE regular meeting of the National Council of the French Socialist Party held last week in Paris was of special significance. In the report of the discussions published by *Le Populaire,* the party paper, one senses the distaste of many members at having to close their eyes to the M. R. P.'s attack on the laws protecting secular education and at having to swallow policies that tend to strengthen the Western bloc. After an impassioned appeal from Léon Blum to avoid any action that might produce an irreparable split among the government parties, the provincial delegates who disagree with the present line limited themselves to a simple statement of reservations.

Thus the Schuman government finds its position somewhat consolidated, and the rumors of a Cabinet crisis heard in the corridors of the Palais Bourbon last week are beginning to subside. On the other hand, the Third Force has come out of the Socialist debates considerably scarred by the thrusts of various delegates. The party leaders obtained a unanimous vote on the general resolution by eliminating any reference to the Third Force and urging instead a "Rassemblement des Républicains." The R. D. R. (Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire), a left-wing group functioning within the party, issued a critical statement which reads in part:

> The R. D. R. is ready to participate in the broadest kind of action against any attempt to institute in France a totalitarian regime of personal power subservient to international capitalism. It rejects as vigorously a regime of so-called popular democracy which would place our institutions under the control of a single party. The Third Force —whose very name proved repugnant to the National Council of the S. F. I. O. [Socialist Party]—by its weakness opens the way to the neo-Gaullists; while it proclaims its independence of all blocs, it nevertheless saw fit to join the battle of the blocs at London and Brussels.
>
> The R. D. R. maintains . . . that the united democratic front is not a mere agglomeration of parties but a vast *rassemblement* open to all who are ready to fight: against the threats of reaction and preparations for a Third World War; against the proposed eighteen-month military-service bill; against military pacts; for a Socialist federation of peoples independent of the two blocs; for an increase in purchasing power by the organization of workers'-control committees; for the allocation to reconstruction projects of the 300 billion francs at present destined for war purposes; for democratic liberties in the French Union, peace with the Viet Nam, annulment of the Algerian elections, and justice for Madagascar.

However, even in this non-conformist declaration the main preoccupation of militant rank-and-file Socialists—their fear that the party will lose prestige by adopting too benevolent a policy toward Germany—finds no direct echo.

In the six-power conference at London the proponents of a German government for Bizonia carried the day over those who advocated a Constituent Assembly whose limited task would be to prepare a constitution for western Germany. Frenchmen believe that General Clay has finally bested his opponents in the State Department; in any case, at his last press conference on April 29 the General again expressed the belief that "we should have as large a government for as many Germans as possible at the earliest possible moment." And while he administered a verbal spanking to the National Democratic Party, an openly pro-Nazi group whose popularity was a significant feature of the elections held two Sundays ago, at the same time he rendered homage to the "great strength and perseverance" of the German population in the western sectors of Berlin. As a result the Germans are convinced that they will be the chief beneficiaries of American policy in Europe and that Germany is the real winner of the diplomatic battle among the former Allies.

But this victorious Germany is not a revolutionary Germany which has broken with its past, with the Hitlerite philosophy of aggression. On the contrary, it is a Germany in which neo-Nazis freely go to the polls and register a relatively large number of votes; in which notorious Nazi officials have been named to important administrative posts, and generals like Franz Halder, member of the former *Oberkommando* of the Wehrmacht, can work at Kassel on a committee of military history and no doubt eventually turn it into a new German general staff.

In the face of this nationalist German revival, French opinion is becoming more and more uneasy. Realizing this, the Communists are putting the accent on nation and patriotism in their approach to the German question.

Perturbed by the doubts revealed at the National Council meeting and in France as a whole, Léon Blum has begun a series of articles in *Le Populaire* in which he proposes "the elements of a solution" for the Ruhr. His program is briefly the following:

1. Expropriation of the Rhine-Westphalia industrial enterprises.
2. Socialization of the heavy industries, to be guaranteed by a kind of political mortgage: the Western powers should envisage the ultimate inclusion of the Ruhr in a collective European organization of coal and steel.
3. Industrial socialization not to imply territorial dismemberment or political separation.
4. Administrative control to be exercised at first by an exclusively inter-Allied authority and later with the collaboration of German representatives.
5. All profits to be turned over to the German people, for socialization is not a disguised form of levy.

Blum is hopeful that his plan will be adopted, since it corresponds to one of several systems proposed by Ernest Bevin. But as a non-Communist paper remarked this morning, "The capital of the Western bloc is Washington, not London." The Socialist leader still has to sell his idea to the free enterprisers on Capitol Hill.

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Housing for America

A Ten-Year Program

THE WELFARE of the people must take precedence over the interests of speculative builders and mortgage lenders. If a famine, a dearth of clothing or medicine—or a housing shortage—finds private enterprise unable to meet the people's needs, it is the duty of the government to intervene: to supplement the activities of private enterprise or, if necessary, to do the whole job itself. Only when business operations are again adequate, is it time for the government to withdraw. This is the theory that justified government intervention in the war-housing emergency. It is no less valid during a peace-time emergency.

A housing program for America should have the following goals:

Construction of 15,000,000 new urban and rural homes in the next ten years: government-subsidized housing for those unable to afford any other decent shelter; self-supporting housing for the middle-income groups. The T.-E.-W. bill is a step in that direction.

Clearance of all slums.

Prevention of future slums through practical building codes and standards, acceptance of which shall be the condition of federal housing assistance.

Replanned cities that will provide decent homes at reasonable cost in solvent neighborhoods, with the journey to work shortened, ample space for recreation, and adequate technical and social facilities to meet the needs of working mothers.

Communities where no discrimination based on race, religion, color, or creed is practiced or allowed.

A home for every veteran needing one.

Housing for the elderly as a right.

Continuance and strengthening of rent controls until the supply of houses has caught up with the demand.

Sounder private ownership through government insurance that will secure owners against the risk of default due to illness, unemployment, or other hazards.

A sound mortgage system, with loans by government agencies if private money is unavailable or private interest rates excessive.

A revitalized, stabilized building industry achieved through large-scale government-sponsored undertakings.

Rationing of critical materials to assure distribution according to need.

Prosecution of monopolies and outlawing of unfair practices that limit construction or rig the prices of materials.

Establishment of a new Cabinet post for Housing and Community Planning.

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WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

I. Cities Fit to Live In

BY LEWIS MUMFORD

WHAT kind of cities do we want? We Americans have never asked ourselves this question, during the last century, in terms of the needs of human living. We have asked for big cities, for skyscraper cities thronging with traffic and rife with trade, sometimes for monumental cities with great civic centers to express a dignity denied by every other activity. More lately we have asked for cities whose blighted areas and partly emptied slums have been converted back again into profitable investments or done over into hygienic "housing developments."

American cities, to a large degree, have been the products of the private land monopolist, the speculative builder, the too canny banker and insurance administrator, the centralizing business bureaucrat, bent on seizing and displaying power. With profit, prestige, and power the controlling influences in city development, more rational and humane ends have become secondary. Accordingly, if we dare to ask ourselves what kind of cities we want, we must be prepared to liquidate many of our present financial activities and to transform the remainder into social enterprises.

Is that too drastic a demand upon our social conscience, our political intelligence, our economic competence? Perhaps it is, but in that case there is no use asking what kind of cities we want. Whatever we may privately yearn for, we shall get the product of the same forces that have been operating in the past; and such modifications as public-housing authorities may make will be subservient to those forces. At best, they will do reasonably well what private enterprise has done badly, to the undermining of its own long-term interests.

Admittedly, the present is a bad time to frame more human demands, since while the housing shortage prevails people will put up with any kind of city so long as it incidentally puts a roof over their heads. That condition, however, is a temporary one. Our great metropolises are overcrowded, financially topheavy, environmentally lopsided; and the excessive costs of the congestion they promote are rivaled only by the costs of the remedies for alleviating it. Even our smaller cities, which have imitated the metropolitan pattern, likewise fall short of any adequate human goal. In the long run our civilization, just because it has already become predominantly urban, cannot afford to misdirect its energies in this fashion. It did not take the atomic bomb to prove that the present form of our cities is doomed. Though decentralization is no answer whatever to the practice of genocide, it is a first step toward building up a sound, life-centered civilization.

The tendency of population movements during the last century has been to heap people into spreading metropolitan districts, dominated by cities with over a million people; some quarter of the population of the entire country lives in such metropolitan areas—suburban in almost every sense. Do we want this movement to continue? If it does, it will produce two unfavorable results: it will wipe out the local balance between city and country and require those who seek recreation in rural areas to travel ever greater distances to have even a glimpse of nature. But even more fundamentally, if metropolitan standards prevail, it will bring about a premature stabilizing of the population, indeed, probably cause it to recede, since the big cities do not biologically reproduce their population and an ever smaller rural group remains to compensate for this lack of urban fertility. Theoretically, the great cities of the Eastern seaboard and the Great Lakes region might continue their growth until they merged into one another, as Minneapolis merges into Saint Paul, in one vast undifferentiated urban mass. But before that point was reached, the urban population would begin to dwindle, for with immigration restricted, its supply would be cut off at the source.

As between big cities and small cities, then, every biological argument backs the small city as more favorable, despite its lack of highly organized medical services, to life. The problem of population is too complicated to be disposed of in an aside; but if we wish to achieve even stability at present levels, we shall have to make it possible for more people to live in towns of fifty thousand or less, because they produce an environment and a routine of life more favorable to family life

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and reproduction. Does this mean that we must abandon the city altogether, as Frank Lloyd Wright has proposed? No, it means something quite different—namely, that we must drain away its population steadily into smaller centers until the metropolitan areas themselves can be reconstituted into a constellation of relatively self-contained communities, built on a more open pattern and separated from one another by parks and green belts.

London already has plans to remove a million people from its central areas into New Towns of some sixty thousand people each, not suburbs but complete and balanced communities, with factories and workshops for the local population. There can be no adequate rebuilding of our congested centers until the pressure that produces this congestion is thus removed. Hence housing and slum clearance, even if undertaken by public authorities, without industrial decentralization, are the most superficial of palliatives. But one must not minimize the cost of such a radical form of urban redevelopment. Since it involves cutting down present urban land values on a colossal scale, it will require heavy state and federal aid to make even the first steps possible: otherwise, merely to avoid bankruptcy, our municipalities—to say nothing of our banks and insurance companies—will fight it tooth and nail.

IN SHORT, we must plan and build new communities, on a large scale, before we can adequately replan and rebuild our old centers. Our present policy of replacing slum areas with grim monumental structures of the kind favored by the New York City Housing Authority changes the existing pattern of congestion but does not alter the fact itself, nor does it lower the land values which make congestion inevitable. A housing policy that purposes to rebuild American cities in this fashion is in the long run the most extravagant possible: it builds the wrong thing, in the wrong order, in the wrong place.

To achieve a better result, we must use governmental means to carry farther the tendency toward industrial decentralization which was fostered in many industries during the war. Regional planning, industrial decentralization, housing, and city development are four aspects of a single process which must be unified if it is to be effective. Administratively, this program cannot possibly be handled from Washington. If we wish to achieve it, our first step must be a political one: we must create regional authorities, on the model of the New York–New Jersey Port Authority or the Tennessee Valley Authority, capable of planning, building, developing, and holding these new communities till they are ready to take over the tasks of self-government. In an article as brief as this I cannot particularize all the political and economic measures that will be necessary: what I would emphasize is that the controlling factors in city building are no longer of a local nature; and that even the most farsighted municipality cannot by itself take the measures necessary to establish a better social structure.

The main point I would make is simple: there is no use asking ourselves what sort of city we want unless we are ready to deal energetically with the forces that have been automatically piling up congestion, disorder, and human depletion. Once this fact is realized, the next thing to understand is a fundamental theorem about city development first put forward by Ebenezer Howard exactly half a century ago. Howard pointed out that there were essentially two methods of city development: one is by continued agglomeration and extension, without any essential change in form; and the other is by reproduction. With the first method growth is unlimited and unbalanced. With the second method, which Howard reinvented, the city has a norm of growth: its area and population are limited. When the city reaches the limits of its growth, another community must be formed, on

"May be the people aren't ripe for it yet."

the same lines, to carry on the social and economic processes. Howard placed the optimum number of people for a relatively self-contained community at 32,000, some two thousand of whom were to be occupied by agricultural pursuits in the surrounding rural area. This was a reasonable guess; though by now, with the increase of facilities for transportation and communication, the upper limit is probably around sixty thousand. What is important to understand about Howard's conception of the garden city as he called it is not merely the limitation of area, or the collective ownership of the land, or density and numbers, but the even more essential principle of cellular growth and cellular division.

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Ideally speaking, a city is a group of cells each of which has a social nucleus which furthers the common life, and the city as a whole is the larger organ of that common life. The principle of cell division applies to every part of a city's activities. If 100 beds is the right number for a well-organized general hospital, then when 500 beds are required, they should not be combined into a single gigantic institution but into five self-contained units distributed through the city or region. If 250 pupils is the desirable number for an elementary school, the neighborhood unit must be scaled and planned to that size. From the smallest housing group to the city as a whole, the aim is to create a balance of activities, in a varied and balanced environment. Instead of fostering growth by agglomeration, we must foster growth by reproduction.

The kind of city we want, accordingly, is one adequately planned and equipped for the fulfilment of life at every stage from cradle to grave. A city might be composed of houses and open spaces of the most excellent design, from one end to the other, without meeting this requirement. Consider the life of an ordinary city neighborhood today. We are happy when such a neighborhood has adequate playgrounds for the young: too easily we forgo the possibilities of swimming pools and gymnasiums, health clinics and maternity clinics, reading rooms and game rooms, where the members of the family would, even outside the home, find a common life. Despite the fact that an ever larger part of the community now lives beyond the age of sixty, what provisions have we made, in new housing communities, to enable the old to continue their normal social relationships? We either shift the aged into overgrown institutions, already cramped for space, or we condemn them to a state of dependency in the insufficiently roomy quarters of their own families. By building special quarters for old folks, scattered about a residential unit, we would give them the care, the stimulus, and the neighborly companionship they need.

None of the essential needs of a well-planned neighborhood, from nursery schools to special quarters for the aged, will be provided by private enterprise, seeking profit, except in the most limited and grudging manner. If we want better cities, we must look forward to the resolute extension of public enterprise, not as at present to rescue bankrupt investments but to rehabilitate a bankrupt life. Free enterprise in a democracy means, among other things, freedom to socialize.

Whatever changes toward more efficient administration take place in the political organization of the country at large, the most important task of all is to rebuild the essential unit of spontaneous cooperation and voluntary effort in the local community and, to begin with, in the neighborhood unit. We must rebuild and reequip the essential cell of community life. All large-scale planning will be inadequate until we have such units to work with. Once we have such units, we can build up balanced cities and draw them together in larger schemes of cooperation; so that eventually we shall have regional units capable of performing effectively all the functions that our metropolitan areas now perform at such a heavy cost.

What kind of cities do we want? Cities in which man

What T.-E.-W. Provides

THE Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill has as its purpose the encouragement of the construction of 12,500,000 to 15,000,000 new dwelling accommodations during the next ten years. In order to accomplish that goal, the bill expands credit facilities so as to encourage private enterprise to do the bulk of the job. More liberal guaranteed-loan terms on low-cost housing for rental purposes are provided, and the bill would guarantee a minimum of 2¾ per cent interest to investors who build housing units, on a large scale, for low rentals. It would extend through March, 1949, the government's authority to insure home loans for an additional sum of $1,600,000,000, thereby increasing the total to almost $7,000,000,000. The bill's most controversial title deals with the authorization of funds to eliminate slum areas and replace them with public-housing units for rental to families whose income is so low that private enterprise cannot and will not provide them with decent, sanitary homes.

The critics of this provision are merely trying to confuse our people as to the purpose and effect of the whole bill. Actually, public housing represents only about 8 per cent of the annual construction program. I know that it will be money well spent, an investment which will pay dividends in better health, better school attendance, and lower crime rates among families now living in slums. That statement is not a theory—it is a fact, proved by the public-housing program inaugurated under the Public Housing Act of 1937. The powerful real-estate lobbies opposed to the legislation scream loudly that the bill is socialistic, that it will ruin the construction industry. Those assertions are entirely without foundation. There is absolutely no competition between public housing and private enterprise. We have specifically provided that federal contributions cannot be made available until a community's elected officials certify that private enterprise cannot and will not meet that community's needs for decent housing for low-income groups.

I have been interested in housing legislation for a long time, and this bill is to a great extent the result of my own experience and observation. If it contained any provision threatening free enterprise or tending toward socialism, you may be sure that I would not be sponsoring it.

ALLEN J. ELLENDER, United States Senator

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is at home again—at home in an orderly and comely environment cut to the human measure: cities where every function necessary to growth and development, biological and cultural, has an appropriate place in the plan and an appropriate structure. To bring such cities into existence, we cannot continue to follow the line of least resistance. Quite the contrary, we must alter our present life-denying goals and lay down the foundations for a new civilization—not a money economy but a life economy.

II. Freedom of Choice

BY CATHERINE BAUER

HOUSING," says the recent report of the National Association of Housing Officials and the National Public Housing Conference, "is one of the great universal tests in this difficult and dangerous post-war world: a test of ideals, ideas, skills, resources; of our democratic capacity for change and growth; of the effectiveness of both private enterprise and government, and of their ability to cooperate; of the intelligence of consumer and voter as well as producer and administrator. If we in America with all our resources cannot even solve our own housing problem, what hope is there?"

It is in this sense that the housing situation should be a matter of prime concern not only to "housers" and the homeless but to all serious citizens. The construction and improvement of homes and communities is a major peace-time art; and since it requires, in our complicated modern world, the delicate adjustment of a great many factors, psychological and political as well as economic, it is an excellent gauge of the social aims and effectiveness of any society, of its ability to use its resources for the benefit of ordinary people.

During the disastrous boom and crash of the late twenties some valuable experiments with planned non-speculative private housing developments were undertaken. Low-rent housing and slum clearance were first begun on a national scale under the United States Housing Act of 1937. This framework stood us in good stead later, when we faced the need of providing emergency homes for migrant war workers. But now, in the worst housing crisis in our history, we have thrown away all our gains in knowledge and experience. The report of the N. A. H. O. and the N. P. H. C. says:

> As far as national policy is concerned, we have turned the clock back to the world of 1920. Of course, we do have rent control [pro tem at least]; interest rates are lower [though they're getting higher again]; and mortgage finance has been considerably reformed. And although house building is as exclusively the province of the speculative builder as it was then, the federal government has in the meantime taken over most of the risk for the builder's mistakes, through the Federal Housing Administration, the Home Loan Bank Board, and the Veterans' Administration. In other words, the government now guarantees much of the profit of private enterprise but assumes no parallel responsibility in the consumers' interest, no assurance of an adequate supply of new housing, no program to secure housing for the families who need it most desperately.

THREE GOALS

The result is that in our third post-war year we are no nearer to housing the homeless veterans than we were in 1945. And we are busily planting the seeds for still worse failures in the future. The N. A. H. O. and N. P. H. C. set three goals for an effective national housing policy. Let us see what the score is today on each.

Goal 1: "Enough homes—to overcome the present shortage, keep up with the increase in families, and replace the slums." We need 20,000,000 new dwellings by 1960, or 1,500,000 a year. Even if we produce at this rate, it will take at least three years to meet the purely quantitative contemporary shortage and another ten to replace the worst slums and provide for new families. But only "around 835,000 permanent homes were completed in 1947," and "this scarcely covers the net increase in families during the same period, let alone making up arrears." Thus we must just about double the current rate.

CATHERINE BAUER, a lecturer at Harvard and Cornell universities and former Rosenberg professor of housing at the University of California, is married to William Wilson Wurster, dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is vice-president of the National Public Housing Conference and was chairman of the joint committee of the N. P. H. C. and the National Organization of Housing Officials which drew up the report "A Housing Program—for Now and Later," quoted extensively in her article. The complete report may be obtained from the N. P. H. C., 1015 Fifteenth Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C., for 25 cents. Miss Bauer is the author of "Modern Housing" and also a frequent contributor to magazines.

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The fact that the shortage is not by any means wholly due to the war has been too little recognized. In the thirties even as in the forties the net increase in family groups was far greater than the number of homes provided. "By 1939 most large cities were acutely aware of a shortage, even though it was partly hidden by unemployment, which always causes considerable 'voluntary' doubling up." This long-term failure of the home-building industry suggests that the present deplorable situation may in fact be all too "normal."

Solely from the viewpoint of productive capacity, strong measures may be necessary if the shortage is to be met in three years: allocation of scarce materials, cutting down of non-essential construction, getting rid of restrictive practices all along the line, expansion in steel and other basic industries. But the first essential is "a firm bi-partisan Congressional determination to achieve a rate of 1,500,000 dwellings per year as quickly as possible, and *maintain* that rate for the next ten to fifteen years." Hit-or-miss measures will never do the job, simply because "most of the restrictive practices which have hamstrung the housing industry . . . reflect fears of overexpansion and underemployment, fears all too well grounded in the past."

Moreover, "the heroic effort required to solve the shortage by 1951 will . . . create the very instrument we need later on to replace slums and, incidentally, combat depression." For it will result in the "high-level stabilization" of residential building which is essential for productive efficiency and social well-being.

But homes will not be produced unless they can be distributed, which brings us to the second aim.

Goal 2: "New homes for all kinds of people—in all income groups, for rural as well as urban families." The great American fallacy has been the notion that any overall housing progress could be achieved by building solely for the top of the market, letting the older dwellings "filter down" to families in the middle and lower income groups. On paper this can be made to sound like quite a logical theory, but in practice there is never enough decent, suitable, and well-maintained hand-me-down housing to take care of more than a fraction of the middle group, and almost none ever reaches the really low-income families. Instead, it is the very process by which we continually add to slums and blighted areas.

> In a shortage filtration either doesn't work at all or works in reverse. Even with rent control, the decent older dwellings are picked up at fancy prices and remodeled by the *higher*-income families. . . .
>
> When the shortage is finally met and we tackle our long-term replacement needs, the theory will work no better. Either families displaced by large-scale clearance operations will overcrowd other blighted or potentially blighted areas or new homes must be built for them directly.

What *is* the effective market in this country today?

> The residential building business as presently constituted can reach only the richest 30 to 35 per cent of American families even in a period of full employment and moderate costs, still fewer at today's inflated price levels. And it is now clear that there are no technological miracles of cost reduction just around the corner. . . . Enough housing to meet bare quantitative needs simply cannot be distributed solely to this small group, even were we to ignore the tragic immediate plight of average and lower-income veterans. And slum replacement and urban redevelopment are out of the question as long as this narrow and ineffective market for new housing is allowed to persist.

The principles of the N. A. H. O. and N. P. H. C. "were first developed in a depression, but in a period of shortage and inflation they are truer than ever. If new housing is to reach all income groups, the production of the speculative builder must be supplemented by non-speculative private housing in various forms and by public construction for the people who cannot get new homes any other way—which brings us right back to the provisions of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill." These provisions are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this issue of *The Nation,* as well as in the N. A. H. O.–N. P. H. C. report. But one point deserves special emphasis: the small low-rent public-housing program envisioned in the T-E.-W. bill should be expanded, and it must not be hamstrung by limiting amendments. All in all, the T.-E.-W. bill is the very least that can possibly be termed a "comprehensive housing program" today. It is the rock-bottom minimum that will get us started, at long last, toward achievement of a *universally effective housing market.*

But attacks on the problems of quantity and price, however bold, will not insure quality, which is our third basic aim.

Goal 3: "Good homes in good neighborhoods in pleasant and efficient communities." First of all:

> Standards must go up, not down. The standards set now by federal and local agencies are likely to determine the quality of America as a place to live in for the next generation. By 1960 about 40 per cent of the population may be occupying homes built *after* 1947. It is too easy, in a period of emergency, to slip backward. The standard of demand has been temporarily lowered: people will take almost anything . . . and there is all too great likelihood that much of what we build now will be obsolete and "undesirable" long before it is worn out or amortized.

Plenty of shoddy building, miserably planned, is going up today. And space standards are rapidly reverting to log-cabin scale. But our ideals and practice are probably farthest apart on the question of arranging homes—and people—in neighborhoods.

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Variety is a basic principle of modern "neighborhood planning." Different types of homes should be included, "to provide adequate choice and to prevent over-standardization both in population and in general appearance," and schools, shops, playgrounds, and other community facilities should be built in at the start. In practice, however, we tend to operate very differently. A central site is usually covered solid with identical apartment buildings and little besides, even if the people to be housed there include many families with small children. And most of the progressively designed community schemes for outlying land have been stopped short by obsolete and rigid zoning ordinances that permit only detached houses, with few if any group facilities.

THE QUESTION OF SEGREGATION

Standardization of building types is matched by a strong trend toward complete social segregation, by class as well as by race, which is about as far from the ideals of democracy as anything could be.

> Zoning and large-scale housing operations tend to standardize wide areas within narrow income limits, while restrictive covenants and tenant-selection policy —with some notable and successful exceptions among forward-looking housing authorities—push us toward the most complete and absolute segregation by race. Housing and planning agencies have a major responsibility for effectuating progress, as rapidly as possible, toward the full integration of ethnic minority groups into our American democracy.
>
> The trend toward wholesale class segregation is no less marked. . . . But when we get a broad-based and efficient home-building mechanism, it should not be impossible to plan new developments to include different types of public and private housing. . . . In recent planning for central reconstruction part of the stated purpose is often to "bring back" some well-to-do families and restore a healthier civic balance. The reverse principle is equally necessary—inclusion of lower-income families in suburban plans. The greatest opposition will come from those upper-class communities whose primary preoccupation is protecting themselves against "invasion." Perhaps they should just be allowed to gently obsolesce in full possession of their prejudices, provided we don't create a lot of new ones.

Does all this sound sentimental and "utopian," even to a liberal audience? Let me state the alternative, implicit in present trends. Your children—and still more, your children's children—will grow up in a world in which generally they will see only one kind of person, their own kind. Anyone of different color or racial origin or economic status will seem queer and foreign to them, and probably dangerous. If this is the right training for citizenship in One World, or even in one nation or one city, then the principles on which this country was founded are indeed obsolete.

NEW HOMES ON NEW LAND—WHERE?

How are we going to fit all this new housing into the larger civic pattern?

> For the past five or ten years we have concentrated on how to get rid of slums and redevelop blighted areas. . . . The work will not be wasted, but the timing and emphasis turn out to have been sadly misplaced. The critical planning problem today is not slum replacement, which cannot be tackled on any scale until the shortage is met, but the location of housing in unbuilt areas.

Almost 5,000,000 dwellings must be built on vacant land in the next three years, more than double that number by 1960.

Drawing by Golden

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> Ten million homes with their schools, shops, open space, and what not will probably take up more than three thousand square miles of space, an area equal to all the land within the boundaries of our forty largest cities, and half again as big as the entire state of Delaware. . . . This is our last great chance to do it right the *first* time, to prevent future blight and remedy some of the ills which already threaten to paralyze and bankrupt our communities . . . ills due primarily to chaotic expansion in the past.

If we follow the line of least resistance, and merely let the sprawl continue, every already insoluble urban problem will simply be redoubled—transportation, traffic congestion, blight, the relation between homes and work, the loss of open space for recreation, the multiplicity of weak local governments with tax rates mounting in direct proportion to their ineffectiveness.

Decentralization of both population and industry cannot be stopped, despite the King Canutes in the planning profession. This situation has been much more boldly faced by the conservative Tax Institute in its recent pamphlet, "The Disintegration of the American City," than by the general run of housers and planners.

What can we do? Real leadership on the question is coming mainly from Britain today. Its new Town and Country Planning Act and New Towns Act are as epoch-making as was its pioneer health and housing legislation a hundred years ago. The central areas of English and Scottish cities, whether blitzed or blighted, are being reconstructed at lower densities than formerly. And no more planless sprawling "ribbon development" is being permitted on the outskirts. New building will be channeled into complete communities, entirely new or expanded from existing small towns, far beyond the present urban fringe and including industry and adequate civic facilities for a cross-section population.

That we are pretty far behind goes without saying. The job of public education in England, although it has a long history, was mainly accomplished in the war years. In the next decade we in America can at least *begin* the task of reversing the current trend toward civic chaos—not by merely copying England, of course, but in terms of our own needs and desires.

"MINIMUM STANDARDS" ARE NOT ENOUGH

The principle of "minimum standards" for everyone, in what our housing act calls "decent, safe, and sanitary homes," is an essential concept for any modern nation, but it can have a rather bleak connotation. It suggests that the only alternative to chaotic slums may be standardized "projects," duly equipped with bathtubs and central heat but not very warming to the spirit. And it can give people the disquieting feeling that all social progress involves some sacrifice of individual liberty, some increase in regimentation.

Nothing could be more fallacious with respect to the possibilities and purposes of a defensible housing policy, whose primary aim should be to offer people a degree of choice they never had before. Indeed, as the housing organizations point out, "it is only because the choice of shelter available to people has become so limited and unsatisfactory by contrast with our resources that 'free enterprise' must be supplemented by public action."

We may have some choice in jobs at the present moment, but what kind of freedom does the home-seeker have? None at all in the current crisis, of course. Even when there are vacancies, low-income families can only choose between one slum and another. And "even if there were no shortage and you had plenty of money, you would probably have to choose between renting a noisy apartment in a crowded neighborhood, where your children must be muzzled, and buying a suburban house which is pleasant and open but isolated and an hour from your work, where you can't find a place to park anyway." Only when there are enough houses at proper prices, decently designed and sensibly located, will there be freedom of choice.

If "housing" in the past has often looked as dull as it sounds, the reasons are not far to seek. Standards and cost limits may have been set too low and administered too rigidly, or good architects may not have been given a chance. But this can be easily remedied if citizens and consumers will take an active continuing part in the formulation of housing policies.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT?

Some very large and basic questions of policy can never be decided until there is enough real variety in homes and neighborhoods, and enough experience in actual occupancy, to help us determine what people really want. Questionnaires are of little use; people who have never had any choice simply do not know how they would best like to live.

> For instance, a basic question . . . is whether the traditional American individual house-and-garden ideal is still as strong as ever or whether more of us will want a closer pattern of urban living, with maximum community services. Vast questions inviting all kinds of needed research are involved in this decision: Are women going to work or stay home? What will we want to do with our leisure time? Which kind of environment is more conductive to having children and raising them properly? Do people more and more want entirely different kinds of homes at different stages in their family cycle?
>
> The experts alone can never decide these matters. We shall not even begin to know the answers until a great many people have the actual power to choose between *good* examples of both kinds of housing. The choice between an expensive suburban house, twenty miles from work and with almost no neighborhood

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facilities, and the usual sunless city apartment on a noisy street and almost equally lacking in group conveniences, is no choice at all.

Sometimes the experts sound as if they wanted to decide these things for us. There should be much more public debate than there has been among the proponents of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City idea, of the Le Corbusier skyscraper Utopia, and even of Frank Lloyd Wright's glorified subsistence-homestead scheme. Philosophical discussion is needed in this field, if only to make people aware of the implications of our routine decisions.

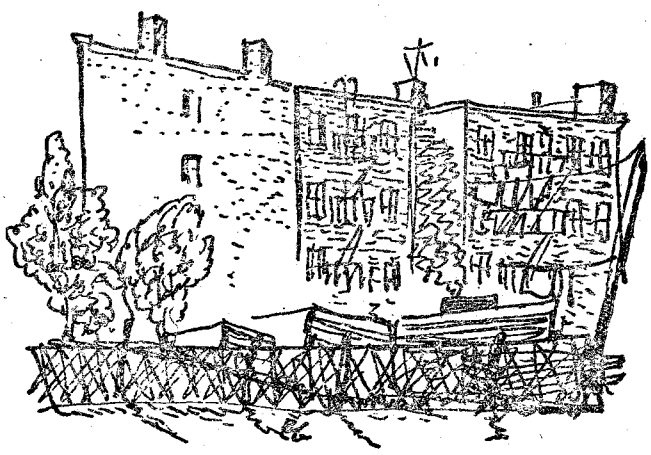
But . . . the positive form of our houses and cities evolves out of changes in popular ideals and living habits, varying from one community to another. And these can only be expressed in the long run through "natural selection," the individual's power to choose. The big job of the experts is to make a *real* choice possible.

III. Fifteen Million Homes

BY LEE F. JOHNSON

TO ASSURE every American family a decent home in a healthful community the best available estimates agree that we must build approximately 1,500,000 houses a year for at least ten years. There is only a relatively slight spread between one estimate and another. A 1945 report of a Senate subcommittee on a ten-year non-farm program proposed 1,200,000 units a year; the report of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee on the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill (S. 1592), a ten-year program of 1,500,000 units a year, urban and rural; the report of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee on the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill (S. 866), 1,500,000 units a year for a "sustained period"; the report of the Federal Reserve Board, 1,200,000 to 1,500,000 units a year, non-farm dwellings. The Twentieth Century Fund recommended a fifteen-year program for non-farm dwellings of 1,300,000 units a year; the joint committee of the National Association of Housing Officials and National Public Housing Conference, a twelve-year program for rural and non-farm dwellings of 1,168,000 units a year.

These figures were arrived at by experts with the help of statistics, charts, tables, and slide-rules. But the reasons why we need so many new houses can be discovered by any thoughtful observer: (1) The shortage is not of current origin; though it was aggravated by the war, it had reached alarming proportions before Pearl Harbor. (2) We have always underbuilt for all but the upper-income groups. (3) At least 2,000,000 families have been forced to double-up with others. (4) Millions are living in sub-standard housing. (5) The number of families has substantially increased. (6) A large number of dwellings are lost annually through condemnation, fire, storm and flood.



Drawing by Golden

If Congress would act now to carry out plans already drawn, a great stride would be taken toward our ten-year objective. Between 1932 and 1947 it has passed no fewer than sixty-eight bills of original or amendatory nature dealing in some fashion with the housing problem. In 1945 it considered a bill intended to produce housing over a ten-year period. Two and a half years and millions of words later practically the same measure is still pending. For all that the record shows, it is getting nowhere.

The Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, now awaiting action by the House, would establish a national housing policy. It recognizes that every possible aid should be given to private enterprise and that public housing should be confined to dwellings for those income groups for which private enterprise cannot afford to build. Perhaps it is the very simplicity of this thesis that makes its acceptance difficult. In and out of Congress people are startled by the elementary proposition that it is physically possible, socially desirable, and economically feasible to take action which will enable Americans to live as Americans ought.

LEE F. JOHNSON is executive vice-president of the National Public Housing Conference, an organization with headquarters in Washington that sponsors the public-housing movement in the United States and works for progressive public-housing legislation. Its seventeenth annual meeting was held in New York City several weeks ago.

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WHAT IS BLOCKING US?

I. The Building Industry

BY ROBERT LASCH

THE last time I saw Karl, who is building a house for me, he had a triumphant smile on his face and good news to report. The I-beam had come. We had been waiting for the I-beam for six weeks. The lumber yard had ordered it from the distributor, who had ordered it from the steel mill, and now at last it had been delivered and Karl could go ahead with his work.

Drawing by William Steig for "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" (Simon and Schuster)

With the I-beam in hand I tackled with renewed zeal the task of getting a bid out of Ed for the heating system. Ed was working twelve hours a day repairing oil burners. Every time he settled down to compute the figures for my job, an emergency call would come in from somebody whose furnace had broken down. Ed finally finished his computations, and we signed a contract.

This enabled me to start negotiations with Joe for the plumbing. While Joe was getting *his* figures together I rounded up several electricians to submit estimates on the wiring, and began to worry about finding a plasterer. About this time the distributor for my shingles called up to say they had arrived, and I had to make arrangements to have them trucked out to the site. Then I heard about a distant lumber dealer who was said to have interior doors at white-market prices. A trip out there confirmed the report. A few days later Karl called to say he had found a millwork manufacturer who would supply our window sashes and frames at a halfway reasonable price.

This sort of thing has been going on ever since I threw prudence to the winds and decided to build a house. When somebody mentions the building industry to me, therefore, my response is, "What building industry?"

Karl and Ed and Joe don't look like an industry to me. Each is a small entrepreneur, engaged in a continuous battle of wits with the unions, the lumber yards, the manufacturers of plumbing fixtures, the millwork people, the glaziers, and all the rest. Not one of them knows at the start of the building season how much work he is going to have. Not one has any reserves of capital. All operate catch-as-catch-can, with almost no planning, only the shoddiest sort of organization, and no sense of participation in an industrial effort.

Karl and Ed and Joe are not, in fact, producers of housing. They are carpenters, plumbers, sheet-metal workers, electricians, and cement men, whose work happens—sometimes—to result in the completion of a house. They may be in house-building today and out of it next year. One good season may graduate them to general contracting; a bad season may send them back to day labor.

If a housing industry really existed, I could visit an office on Main Street—just as I go to see the automobile dealer in his salesroom—and order a house. The house producer would send out truckloads of materials from his warehouse and a crew of workmen. The same crew would build the foundations, lay up the chimney, raise the frame, sheathe it and roof it, put in the wiring, instal the plumbing, instal the heating system, lay the floors, hang the doors, plaster, paint, and decorate—and then the boss would present a single bill.

ROBERT LASCH, chief editorial writer of the Chicago Sun-Times, *is the author of "For a Free Press," which won an* Atlantic Monthly *prize, and "Breaking the Building Blockade." He has been a Rhodes scholar and Nieman fellow.*

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If a housing industry really existed, you could get a house by buying a certain number of standardized wall panels, roof panels, and floor panels, together with prefabricated utility units, and then hiring somebody to put them together. Or you could call on the local agent for a prefabrication firm and have him ship a standard ready-made house to your site. With few exceptions nothing like this is available to the man with an average income today. If you can afford it, you can turn your home-building headaches over to an architect and a general contractor and go away some place while the house is being built. But whether the contractor or the architect or the owner deals with the multifarious trades involved in building, the process remains the same.

BECAUSE the building industry is an unplanned amalgamation of many trades and tradesmen rather than an integrated business enterprise, its costs bear little relation to volume of production. Unit costs steadily rise in any period in which the "industry" is expanding to meet an increasing demand. Instead of bringing more and more people into the market as it expands, the building industry forces more and more people out. And eventually, when depression sets in, costs do not fall as fast as they rose. They come down only as prices in general come down. In short, it takes a depression to cut building costs. The same depression restricts the market for housing by lowering incomes. The supply never catches up with the demand until the demand no longer exists.

While building is subject to all the uncertainties of the free business cycle, it has become increasingly less free through the years. Each of its component trades has organized around a separate core. And each, in its particular self-interest, has contributed to the maddening network of combinations, restrictive practices, rackets, padded costs, and featherbed operations that strangles competition and inflates costs.

You can argue that the building trades are simply cutting their own throats. If they would jointly try to keep costs down, you can say, they might enlarge their market instead of reducing it. But the building industry is not impressed by this reasoning, chiefly because of its own fragmentation. With some justification each part can say that a few padded costs in its sphere will not greatly add to the total cost of the house. Furthermore, each department sees the others profiteering and quite understandably objects to being the sole martyr to self-restraint. When the carpenters see the contractors chalking up extra profits during a building boom, you cannot blame them too much for wanting to get theirs.

Basically, I suppose, the trouble is that none of the tough cookies in the building trades really believe the talk about eliminating depressions through planning. Knowing that business—construction particularly—has always fluctuated, they have little faith that the future can ever be different. Therefore they insist on making their profit during the up-period of the cycle, even if by doing so they insure the arrival of the down-period. This attitude, on examination, is not so very different from the attitude of business men generally. The dog-eat-dog scramble for profits is scarcely confined to the building trades. The result peculiar to the building industry, however, is a chronic inability to function fully or properly. The public needs a steady supply of new housing priced to suit various income levels, but the building industry usually produces housing only for the higher levels, and that only sporadically.

The cure for this tragic failure is to be found in planning. The first step must be national and local pressure for housing programs that will give the building industry assurance against a future depression. If the nation and the community made it perfectly clear that absorption of a certain volume of housing would be *guaranteed* for the next ten years, they would have the right to demand that the industry give up its antique ways, its monopolies, and its restrictive practices, and behave like a modern enterprise meeting modern needs. Private enterprise alone, obviously, will not create the incentives or insure the freedom necessary for the attainment of our social objectives in housing. If we are really in earnest about those objectives, we must adopt a national long-term housing program.

Teamwork in Congress

THE Senate once again rose to the level of statesmanship for which that body has often distinguished itself when it passed the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill.

The bill as amended does not alter but strengthens the basic principles and provisions of the original bill and its predecessors, the first of which was introduced over two and one-half years ago. The bill provides the basic tools for the whole housing job: for doing it democratically, with equitable regard for the interest of all the people, in a way that places maximum reliances upon private enterprise, and without shirking the bedrock responsibility to provide for the people what they must have and cannot otherwise be provided. The general approach to the bill strikes the keynote for the spirit and method with which we must approach all our economic problems.

The success we have had thus far with the housing bill was brought about by good teamwork. The teamwork must continue in the House. I am confident that because its enactment stands as a challenge to do a big job in the American way the House will follow through and pass the bill in substantially its present form.

ROBERT F. WAGNER, United States Senator

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II. Folklore and Taboos

BY JOHN P. DEAN

W. H. D. RIVERS called attention years ago to a Melanesian tribe among whom canoe building became so encumbered with taboos, social prohibitions, and personal penalties that soon no one wanted to practice it and no more canoes were built. Yet that society needed canoes. Substitute houses for canoes and present-day America for Melanesia, and you have our housing picture today. We haven't stopped building houses, but we are on the way. Meanwhile, those of us who most seriously need housing do without.

A rather intricate double-talk cloaks our ineffectiveness in attacking the problem. We engage in bitter controversy over proposals that really cannot solve anything; we give little attention to proposals that represent real progress, because we know their chance of legislative enactment is slim. The public is confused; even the experts frequently confuse one another. And through all this muddle we hold to our belief that somehow the "American way" can produce good low-priced houses for all.

In an effort to solve the housing problem without disturbing the status quo we make use of three devices: (1) we elaborate our housing myths; (2) we tinker hopefully with our aid-for-housing machinery; and (3) we pass new, complicated, experimental legislation.

OUR HOUSING MYTHS

Any realistic examination of the root of our trouble—the too high cost of good houses—is made nearly impossible by the shallow slogans which are repeated whenever the subject is discussed. Among the more widespread and pernicious are the following:

"Just give private enterprise a chance and it will do the job." But in no year since 1929 has private enterprise produced enough new houses to provide for the new families created in the same year.

"The shortage of homes is only a temporary emergency created by the war." Yet 4,500,000 homes are needed by the end of 1950 just to take care of new families and permit those now camping on their in-laws to "undouble." To build these, our rate of production must exceed by 50 per cent the rate in our most productive year to date—1925. Eight million additional homes will be needed to replace our worst slums and blighted areas. If 10,000,000 of the 12,500,000 homes we need are built on vacant land, they and the streets, schools, shops, and parks to serve them will require, as Miss Bauer points out on page 536, an area equal to the combined size of more than forty of our largest cities.

"Owning your own home is the American way." This ballyhoo is shouted constantly at the American public. The real-estate boys want everybody to believe that a house and land, in the long run, always increase in value and are therefore a good investment, that owning is cheaper than renting, that payments on a house are savings put away for a rainy day, that home ownership offers security for old age, that buying a home under a monthly-payment plan is "just like renting."

All these illusions have been exposed so often and so thoroughly that it would be tedious to do it again here. Let me just say that home ownership involves unforeseeable risks requiring great caution and expert knowledge. Every year hundreds of thousands of families disregard the risks and later regret it. Between 1926 and 1938 foreclosures came unpleasantly close to balancing the number of homes built. How many families, buying at today's inflated prices, are headed for disaster?

"Filtering down will take care of families that cannot afford new housing." In other words, even if the new homes built by private enterprise are so expensive that only one-third of our families can afford them, still, when those who *can* afford them move in, they will leave behind a number of vacant homes. Unable to compete at the highest level, these homes will drop in rent or sales price until families in the middle-income group can afford them. The homes left vacant by this group will in turn drop in rent, and so on until even the families that can pay no more than $30 a month will be able to move into decent homes.

Unfortunately, it just doesn't work that way. In the first place, we are unlikely to get the surplus required to set off the filtering-down process at any given level, since builders won't build in the face of a surplus. Even if private builders did overbuild for the upper-income groups, a tremendous number of second-hand houses would have to decline in rent to meet the needs of only those families in the middle-income group which now have no place to live. It is ridiculous to think that the number of middle-income homes would be increased to such an extent that the filtering-down process would enable our huge slum population to wind up with new homes. Even if we made this absurd assumption, we could still be quite sure that the houses would not be

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adequate in condition or design or suitable in size or location for the families that would move into them, nor could they be kept in decent condition while renting for from $20 to $40 a month. A look at the record makes it clear that filtering down, where it *has* occurred, in bits and driblets, is merely the traditional method of providing low-income families with inferior housing.

TINKERING WITH THE MACHINERY

It will be quite impossible for us to solve the housing problem without substantially revamping our traditional housing practices. Unwilling to come to grips with this basic fact, we continually tinker with the financial apparatus of house-building in the hope that, once we get the wheels of production turning, the machinery will do more than spark, creak, grind forth a few houses, and then shudder to a standstill.

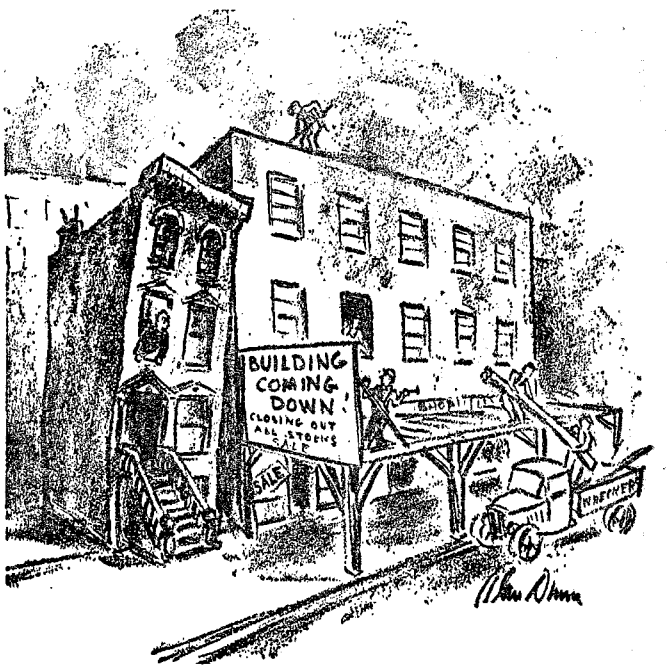
Speculative building operations were not very attractive under the Federal Housing Administration legislation, even though the government guaranteed FHA mortgages 100 per cent. But toward the end of the thirties Congress gave further assistance to the industry by permitting a smaller down payment and a longer amortization period for buyers of FHA houses. Home builders then began to vie with one another in more and more ambitious subdivisions. When the risks increased during the defense program, owing to rising costs and the reluctance of the FHA to underwrite inflated values, the builders pressed for ever greater protection. So Congress responded with the Title VI war-housing fund, which permitted the FHA to underwrite high war-time risks.

After the war the mortgage-lending fraternity and the home builders succeeded in having Title VI extended to include the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program. This cleared the track for some of the largest speculative subdivisions we have ever seen. The revolution had begun: the private-enterprise housing industry learned that under manipulated government protection it could become big business, but as someone has pointed out, it was scarcely "private" or "enterprise."

Manipulation of mortgage arrangements and liberalization of credit under the FHA and the G. I. Bill of Rights are supposed to invite families of smaller means into the home-purchasing arena—and sometimes they do. More often, the easier financing terms are reflected in higher selling prices. Even in ordinary times the home purchaser needs to keep all his wits about him to steer clear of a sour investment; today, in a seller's market of overpriced second-hand homes and the first high-priced samples of post-war housing, liberalized credit to the consumer is likely to be a temptation to disaster.

If we are going to widen the home-purchasing market by juggling the financing arrangements, then we should reduce the buyer's risks. There are three obvious ways of doing this: (1) Make the terms of purchase so easy that buying will truly be "just like paying rent." By eliminating down payments, reducing interest rates, allowing for flexibility in payments during times of financial distress, eliminating deficiency judgments, and making home transfer easy, we could make sure that in case of default, the buyer would lose nothing more than he was laying out every month. (The home buyer seldom understands that his mortgage obligation is a solemn debt that he must repay whether he stays in the house or not. If the return from a foreclosure sale or other sale does not cover the outstanding debt, the owner must make up the deficit. The court ruling that requires this payment is called a deficiency judgment.) (2) Develop some form of equity insurance. It would not take much revamping of the FHA formula to establish a system in which the equity that a purchaser built up by paying off his mortgage would be returned in case of default. As it is, we protect the lender rather than the home owner. (3) Improve the standards of house and neighborhood design. If easier terms were made dependent upon higher standards, the home owner, mortgage lender, and guaranteeing agency would all benefit and the risk would be shifted from the integrity of the home owner to the house—where it belongs. The mortgage machinery should be adjusted in favor of the consumer.

What about rental housing? Before the war 80 to 90 per cent of all new construction consisted of houses for sale. Builders had to be induced to produce rental housing by special FHA rental-housing provisions: the FHA lets a builder get his expenses out of a project before it is rented—and then hands him an equity he didn't pay for. The magic that produces this miracle is as follows: Although rents are permitted that insure only a 6½ per cent return, a 7 per cent allowance for vacancies boosts the builder's return for the first few years to 10 or 15



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per cent. Allowances for management and operation under the FHA exceed the usual needs of building management. Generous reserve allowances permit the builder, who has invested no money in the project, to milk it by providing as little maintenance as he can get away with. Is it any wonder that stiff pressure is being brought on Congress to extend these benefits for ten years?

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

If we reject the idea that our aid-for-housing institutions require a major overhaul, we have to call in the slide-rule wizards and ask them to conjure up new formulas that will preserve the status quo and achieve housing for families with modest incomes. The common denominator of the suggestions that have been made is a set of fictions that conceal from all but the sophisticated the nature of this sleight-of-hand.

Tax exemption is a popular feature of these proposals. It does not require appropriations, and huge hidden subsidies can sometimes be concealed in it. An equivalent cash subsidy would be "inexpedient politically," since the public would be quick to perceive what was going on. Uncontrolled tax exemption, as granted during the early 1920's, was an outrageous subsidy to speculative builders of shoddy housing. Nevertheless, it is being proposed today in slightly modified form.

Procedures that would favor special groups are included in many of the new schemes. The American Legion's Veteran Homestead bill, for example, would allow five or more veterans to organize an association to build, buy, or rent real estate. If the Veterans' Administration were lenient in administering the law, many veterans would incur losses; if the V. A. were tough, few houses would be built.

Befuddled by contradictions and complexities such as these, we have forgotten America's strength. Our productive capacity can achieve unbelievable goals when properly channeled. America can do pretty much what it wants to do, if it wants to badly enough. But unless we cut through our tangled system of aid for housing before the undergrowth gets any thicker, we may find housebuilding choked off.

CAN WE DO IT?

I. Yes, in an Integrated Economy

BY LEON H. KEYSERLING

IN HIS State-of-the-Union message and Economic Report in January President Truman set as the housing goal a decent home for every American family within ten years. In a special housing message in February the President made more detailed recommendations for attaining this goal.

President Roosevelt and many others had previously voiced the same general aspiration. Specific housing proposals almost as comprehensive as those advanced in February by President Truman had been urged upon Congress by the President on earlier occasions, and many of them were embodied in the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill two years ago. The question is, then: Has anything significant recently emerged in the field of housing policy?

LEON H. KEYSERLING has been vice-chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to the President since its creation under the Full Employment Act of 1946. Between 1937 and 1942 he became acting commissioner of the Federal Public Housing Authority and then general counsel to the National Housing Agency. He is the author of "Legal Problems in the Housing Field," "The Road to Freedom," and "Why the Wagner Act?"

The answer to this question is emphatically in the affirmative. The new element of vital significance is the recognition that our housing goal cannot be defined or achieved in splendid isolation. It must, instead, be placed firmly within the framework of a consistent program of goals for the whole economy.

This is the signal import of President Truman's messages. For the first time they place a ten-year goal for housing in the setting of ten-year goals for the growth and improvement of the whole economy, and outline the related policies for the attainment of these related goals.

We cannot decently house all Americans unless our economy expands at a rapid and steady rate through continuous full employment. The drop from more than 900,000 urban homes built in 1925 to less than 100,000 built in 1932 shows what happens to housing when our whole economy runs down-hill. We cannot sustain an average housing production over the next ten years more than twice as large as the record made in the best ten years before the war unless our total national output rises by 1958 to about twice as much as it was in 1938.

On the other hand, full employment and full production will not *of themselves* assure this high housing

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achievement. We now have full employment and almost full production, but even if these were to be maintained indefinitely there would still be millions of lower-income families who could not afford decent housing under any foreseeable conditions of income distribution and housing techniques.

Thus there is need for *specific* housing measures even under conditions of continuous full employment. And without these specific housing measures to sustain a high level of mass demand for new residential construction, we cannot indefinitely sustain full employment, because residential construction looms so large in the total compound of national production. Housing, in short, affords the best illustration of the interrelationship between highly specialized programs and a general program for American prosperity. Responsive to these realities, the President's Economic Report of last January outlines some attainable objectives for the next decade. The report calls for a 35 per cent increase in total national output and a 27 per cent improvement in living standards after allowing for population growth and other factors. It goes on to cite some of the specific areas in which our efforts should be concentrated: plant expansion, resource development, diets, educational and health services, and housing. Finally, the report sets forth the economic policies, on the part of both private enterprise and government, for the attainment of these goals.

NOW what is new in this approach directed toward these economic goals? The trouble with a good deal of current economic thinking is that attention is concentrated almost entirely upon the detailed economic policies to be pursued—price policies, wage policies, profit policies, tax policies, etc. It is thought that these can achieve a condition of economic health. But just because the health that we are seeking consists of certain consumer-satisfaction goals, it is only by defining these goals first that the detailed economic policies can be wisely derived or applied. Economic policy being a means to human ends, we cannot evaluate the means without knowing where we want to go.

During the war we had specific ideas about production goals and the allocation of resources. We knew that about half of our national output had to be withdrawn from civilian use and applied to the prosecution of the war. We knew that we had to use certain materials to build planes, tanks, and guns, even if it meant—for example—deterioration of our railroad equipment. We knew that we could afford few gadgets, little joy-riding. And just because we had some clear idea of the end results needed, we could rally popular support for intelligent economic policies.

Today there are too many of us who have carried over from war-time experience a preoccupation with the mechanics of economic policy—such as the wage-price-profit relationship—while neglecting to lift our sights to the end purposes which must give these mechanics meaning. In peace as in war, though by different methods, the designation of at least a few major goals, housing among them, is the essential starting-point for worth-while national achievement.

President Truman's Economic Report, carrying out the sound requirements of the Employment Act of 1946, makes a sizable start toward developing these goals. It includes the goal of a decent home for every American family within ten years. More broadly, the report tests economic policy against "needed levels" of employment and production within the device of a "nation's economic budget." This is a convenient tool for applying, in the national economy, the adjustment of means to ends which govern the operations of a soundly run business or a well-managed family. It is within this long-term program for the economy as a whole that a long-term housing program finds its significant place.

So much for the *economic* value of goals. They are equally valuable from the viewpoint of the popular psychology. Whether the unfolding years will realize our incalculable capacity for progress or instead bring on another depression depends on our *affirmative* efforts. A program for such effort is not too hard to formulate; the trying task is to gain the general agreement which alone can put the program into effect in time. In 1933 that sufficiency of agreement resulted from four years of unparalleled economic suffering; in 1941 it resulted from foreign attack. Where is the propulsion to come from today; what moral equivalent have we for depression or war? We now face the infinitely difficult task of mobilizing public opinion when the bases for action are obscured by full employment and high prosperity.

We can and must rise to the challenge. We should

The Duty of the State

WE have long recognized the duty of the state to give relief and free medical care to those unable to pay for it, and I think shelter is just as important as relief and medical care. . . . I believe there should be a comprehensive [housing] plan with the ultimate purpose of securing decent housing for all American families, and I think the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill is a step in that direction. As for a public-housing program, I would hope it might take care of the needs of 10 per cent of the people, namely, those of the steadily employed low-income group who have the lowest income. . . . If I were sure we could solve the housing problem in this country and keep it solved by expending $400,000,000 a year, I would favor doing it.

ROBERT A. TAFT, United States Senator
(New York *Post*, January 27)

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popularize our national economic goals, realistically and effectively. Americans have a tremendous faith in what they can do. They want to combine social justice with economic progress. They can be excited by a program to stamp out poverty no less than by a war to stamp out fascism. They do not need to be "sold" a housing program on the ground that it will provide jobs and stave off unemployment. They can understand that slums are even more intolerable in a prosperous economy than in one which is depressed.

Our American tradition is to pyramid progress upon progress, never being satisfied that the best for today is good enough for tomorrow. These things the people feel. They need only the unifying goals to provide a basis for action.

This initial momentum can result from the Employment Act of 1946. Under its provisions the government needs to assert considerable leadership because it has the over-all perspective, but private and public groups are participant. This will require new combinations of federal, state, and local responsibility. Housing provides an unequaled opportunity for this composite action, since its primary goal is the welfare of all the people and its development in practice is enormously complicated. The magnitude and content of the program this calls for, and the methods by which we can make it succeed, are set forth in the other articles of this special issue of *The Nation*. My purpose here is to make clear the fact that the housing problem is part and parcel of the problem of our entire economy, and that without an inclusive approach there can be no solid solution.

Those dispirited or alienated liberals who find it easy to blame a few individuals for the present relative lack of forward drive—in housing and elsewhere—do not fully measure the tasks before us. No one man or group of men can alone provide the people with the moral equivalent for depression or war. Countless workers everywhere must assume the hard and often unglamorous task of popular education. If that job is not shirked, President Truman's goal of a decent home for every American family—and his other goals for national progress—will certainly be reached.

II. A Business Man's Prescription

BY NATHAN STRAUS

ALL the new housing built this year will be beyond the means of half of the population, whether it is housing for sale or housing for rent. If one disregards a little trickle of public housing built by local authorities during the Roosevelt Administration for the poorest third of the population, the same thing could have been said in any year of the past half-century, in good times or bad. This fact must be the starting-point of any useful discussion of housing.

Even the public-housing trickle has dried up; the Washington lobby of the slum landlords and the building and loan associations has seen to that. The cheapest two-bedroom house or flat now offered by the speculative builder is priced at $8,000 exclusive of the land, or it rents for $80 a month and up. To afford that, a family today should have an income of $4,000 a year. Only one family in four will earn that much this year.

What is the answer? Can homes be built that will be within the means of the families that need them most? I believe they can. And I will stake my reputation, based on years of successful experience in private and public housing, on the soundness of the following proposals.

Low-rent public housing should be erected by local housing authorities. It should be designed by private architects and built by private contractors employing labor at prevailing wages. This public housing should be of two kinds—subsidized and self-supporting. The subsidized housing would be for the lowest-income families. The annual subsidies required would range from $25 to $125 per family, and would come from state and federal funds. (The conspicuous success of the United States Housing Authority from 1938 to 1942 has set a pattern which it is safe to follow. Nearly 200,000 families were rehoused, every one of which came from a slum tenement or shack. Construction cost averaged about 25 per cent less than that of housing put up by private speculative builders during the same years in the same communities.)

The capital funds needed for a subsidized public-housing program can be obtained without difficulty from private sources. Experience proves this. Investors are ready to buy local housing-authority bonds in practically

NATHAN STRAUS is a business executive who believes good housing is good business. His radio station, WMCA, staged a successful campaign for the adoption of a program of self-supporting housing in New York City last January. From 1937 to 1942 he was administrator of the United States Housing Authority in charge of an $800,000,000 public-housing program. He has also been special housing commissioner for the City of New York. He is the author of "The Seven Myths of Housing."

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unlimited amounts at an interest rate of approximately 2 per cent.

Subsidized public housing should, however, be only a minor part of the program. Self-supporting public housing should constitute the major part. Rents in self-supporting projects should be set at a level sufficient to meet all operating costs and financial charges. They would amount to about $50 a month for a four-room or two-bedroom apartment.

The cities in which these projects are built would collect taxes on the land utilized for them—but not on the buildings.

As in the case of subsidized housing the capital funds needed to finance the construction would be obtained from private investors. Two methods have been worked out for tapping this source. Both have been discussed in detail with banks, life-insurance companies, and the largest private-banking concerns in Wall Street. The legal details have been studied and approved by the legal counsel on whom these large financial institutions are accustomed to rely.

Bonds of the local housing authority would be sold to private investors in an amount equal to 100 per cent of the cost of the project. Security for these bonds would be the rentals themselves. But in order to insure the sale of the bonds at a low interest rate, additional security is required. This can be provided in one of two ways.

One method calls for a small annual city tax. For a housing project costing $10,000,000, the tax would have to provide only $100,000 a year. And it is probable that the tax would never have to be collected after the first year. Once raised, it would lie in the treasury of the housing authority as additional security or guaranty, to be drawn upon only if unforeseen circumstances interfered with the collection of rents. All experience with public housing in the last ten years indicates that the guaranty would never have to be used.

The alternative method of providing the necessary security is a federal guaranty: that is, the United States government would guarantee the bonds of the local authority. To build up a reserve fund on which the federal government might draw in case of default by a local authority, the authority would have to pay over a certain number of years an annual premium of one-eighth to one-quarter of 1 per cent of the total bond issue.

Bonds secured by a mortgage upon public-housing projects and further secured by either one of the methods proposed above could be sold at an interest rate not exceeding 2¾ per cent. Since the chief factor in the annual cost of housing is the cost of capital, this feature of the proposals is of the highest importance.

Such a program would provide good housing at low rents without imposing a great burden on the taxpayer. The arguments against it arise from honest ignorance or from deliberate misrepresentation. Many of the arguments advanced by the National Association of Real Estate Boards, the National Association of Home Builders, and the United States Savings and Loan League are based on misrepresentation. The heart of the opposition to public housing is formed by these powerful and immensely wealthy organizations.

Under their influence government policies today are aiding speculative builders of houses for sale. This is wrong, for there is no shortage of credit for that purpose. It is wrong because the government should not encourage families with small incomes, including veterans' families, to buy homes. Half the families in the United States, even in this period of high incomes, earn less than $2,700 a year. A house bought on the instalment plan by such a family often becomes an insatiable monster that swallows earnings and hopes alike. The buyer finds that he does not own the house but that the house owns him.

The federal government should stop aiding speculative builders to peddle houses on the instalment plan and should start aiding communities to build large-scale rental-housing projects.

The A. F. of L.'s Position

IF THE housing shortage, now in its most acute stage, is to be met fully and effectively, the two most essential steps are, first, the enactment of the T.-E.-W. bill, already approved by the Senate and now pending before the House, including its public-housing title, and, second, stabilization of building-material and real-estate prices. Local planning for redevelopment of cities, towns, and rural areas, construction of low-rent homes by local authorities, and slum clearance must be made a part of a long-range program for the whole nation, with provision for the necessary federal aid. Equally important is the assurance of extended economic stability, without which millions of low-income families will continue to be deprived of decent homes. Firm standards must be established for private-home construction, putting an end to widespread jerry-building. An eighteen-month guaranty against structural defects should go with the purchase of every new home. A lapsed-payment plan, extending the payments up to two years in the event of unemployment or other acute economic distress, should protect home buyers against eviction when they are least equipped to meet the emergency. Payment of not less than prevailing wages on all home construction should be required by federal law. A large amount of rental housing for families of low and moderate incomes should spearhead the long overdue attack on America's most vital domestic front. Labor's objective on the housing front is the assurance of a decent home for every American family.

WILLIAM GREEN, President, A. F. of L.

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THE POLITICS OF HOUSING

I. Veterans Want Action

BY CHAT PATTERSON

NEARLY two thousand veterans from thirty-nine states, representing seven major veterans' organizations, gathered in Washington last March to tell their representatives in Congress that they wanted long-range housing legislation—and pronto. For three years the returned soldiers had been demanding that Congress take action to solve the housing crisis, and for the same period the powerful real-estate lobby had been fighting against any effective program. The first round had been won by the real-estate lobby: with an assist from President Truman the lobby killed the Wyatt Emergency Housing Program just as it was beginning to show results. The Washington congress was an expression of the veterans' determination that the second round should not be lost—that the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill should be passed.

When the war ended, the nation faced the greatest housing shortage in history. And the returning ex-service men found that as a group they were hit the hardest by it. The Bureau of Census last year published a report which showed that from 30 to 40 per cent of married veterans were living in rented rooms or doubled up with in-laws. In Los Angeles County, California, 50 per cent of the married veterans were without acceptable living quarters; in New York City, 44 per cent. The report also showed that veterans could not afford to buy or rent the housing now being produced. With an average weekly income of $40 to $50 veterans cannot pay more than $50 a month rent or buy a house costing more than $7,000.

Recognizing the ex-soldiers' housing plight, Congress passed the Veterans' Emergency Housing Act and named Wilson Wyatt as administrator. By the use of priorities and controls on materials prices Wyatt attempted to get houses built at costs within the veterans' means. After the 1946 elections, however, the Wyatt program was abandoned, and everybody waited to see if the real-estate lobby would carry out its promise that once controls were removed, abundant low-cost housing would be forthcoming. We all know the result. Housing is being produced—but at prices half again as high as under the Wyatt program, prices which effectively exclude the majority of veterans from buying homes.

Today housing is as scarce in most parts of the country as in 1945. The goal of the veterans' program was to build 2,700,000 units in two years, including new permanent housing, conversions, temporary housing, trailers, and 800,000 prefabricated units. Actually 1,900,000 units have been built—1,500,000 of them permanent construction. The prefabrication scheme has been a complete failure. This is something Congress should investigate, for next to the T.-E.-W. bill, industrialized housing offers the best hope of bringing down costs.

One reason for the failure of the housing prefabricators is found in the antiquated municipal building codes. These codes force up the cost of homes and make erection of industrialized housing virtually impossible. The housing-research section of the T.-E.-W. bill is expected to bring real progress in gearing housing production to our industrial system, but the progress will be stymied unless the building codes are revised.

Only the A. V. C. among veterans' organizations rallied to the defense of the Wyatt program. In the old-line veterans' groups the intrenched World War I leadership chose to take their cue from the lobbies rather than heed the pleas of the new veterans. The issue was brought to a head when World War II veterans in the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars began calling for indorsement of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill. In the V. F. W. the bill's supporters finally won a victory in the 1946 national convention, but Commander Louis Starr made a last-ditch attempt to throw the decision out the window. Claiming that the "acoustics were bad" at the time the convention voted for indorsement, Starr said the action was not valid and would not be implemented. But when delegate Jack Kennedy, a World War II veteran who is now a Congressman from Massachusetts, said that if the vote on the T.-E.-W. bill were challenged he would challenge Starr's election on the ground that acoustics were equally bad when he was elected, Starr gave in. Under his leadership, naturally, the V. F. W. did not campaign very vigorously for the T.-E.-W. bill, but this year it has joined A. V. C. in a real effort to force action from Congress.

The position of the legion has been a bitter blow to the housing hopes of ex-service men and has greatly aided the campaign of the real-estate lobbyists. In

CHAT PATTERSON was formerly national legislative director and is now chairman of the American Veterans' Committee, which has led the fight of veterans of World War II for better housing.

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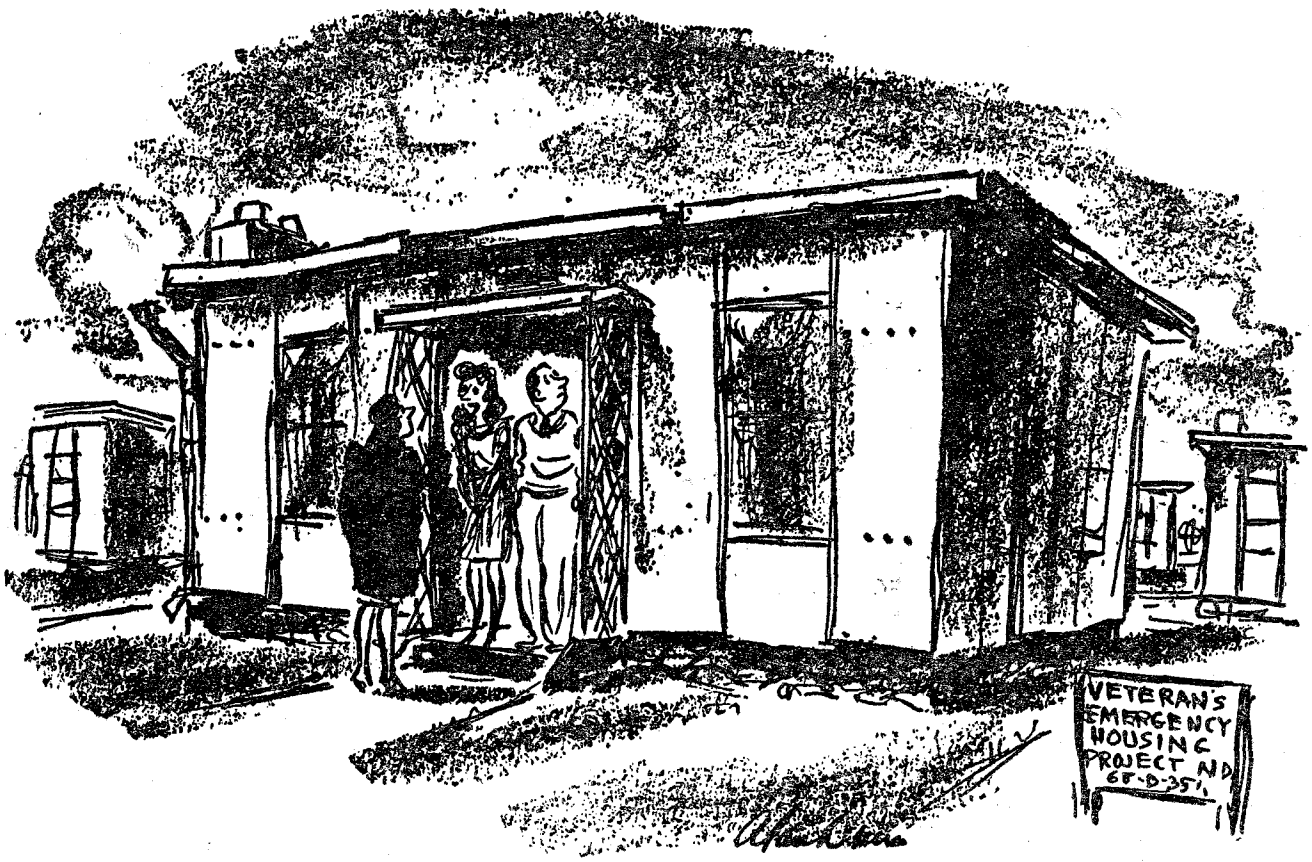
1946-47, under Commander Paul Griffith, the legion was the lobby's principal errand boy on Capitol Hill. At the legion's 1946 national convention the leaders arbitrarily killed any discussion of housing by appointing a so-called housing committee, which spent a year parroting the negative program of the lobbyists. At the 1947 convention the leaders resorted to the shockingly undemocratic procedure of counting delegates not actually on the floor as opposed to the T.-E.-W. bill. To prove its interest in the housing problem, and to keep veterans divided, the legion recently came forward with a so-called Veterans' Homestead Act which is obviously unsatisfactory and unworkable.

AT THE A. V. C.'s national convention in June, 1947, the delegates agreed that there was need for a demonstration of united veterans' support for the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill. They therefore voted to call a national conference of all veterans' organizations in Washington and to demand action by Congress on the bill. With Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., A. V. C.'s national housing chairman as sponsor, the call was sent out, and thanks to the cooperation of such outstanding spokesmen for veterans' housing interests as Jack Kennedy of the V. F. W., Jack Javits of the Jewish War Veterans, Robert Wagner, Jr., of the Catholic War Veterans, Audie Murphy of the Disabled American Veterans, and Paul McCauley of the American Legion, the conference was held as scheduled. McCauley deserves particular credit for his courage in acting as the leader of the millions of legion members who support the T.-E.-W. bill. The legion national office, of course, not only refused to allow any official participation in the conference but made every effort to force McCauley to withdraw. The number of legionnaires who did attend was a shock to the hierarchy, and the next convention is expected to sing a different tune.

The position of Amvets on the T.-E.-W. bill has been confused. At their convention last year Senator McCarthy persuaded them to refrain from indorsing it specifically, saying he was going to introduce other legislation they would prefer to support. McCarthy's proposals, it turned out, closely paralleled the T.-E.-W. bill except for their rejection of public housing. When they met total defeat in both the joint Housing Committee and the Senate Banking Committee, the Amvets were left out on a limb. Now that the Senate has passed the T.-E.-W. bill, however, they are released from their obligation to support McCarthy's measure and are expected to join A. V. C., the V. F. W., and other ex-service men's groups in the House fight.

At the Washington conference the delegates divided into state groups and called on their own Senators and Congressmen. Senators Taft and Tobey pledged quick action by the Senate Banking Committee and early referral of the T.-E.-W. bill to the Senate floor. They kept



"Just think, in twenty years it will be all ours!"

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their promise, and the Senate passed the bill last month.

The chief significance of the veterans' housing conference was that for the first time veterans were acting together as an organized group. Members of Congress were forced to listen, and many of them were perhaps surprised to learn that World War II veterans regard housing as the most important question before the Eightieth Congress. They have not been allowed to forget it either. After the conference the delegates went home and organized city and state councils on which the various veterans' organizations were represented. When the vote on the T.-E.-W. bill loomed in the Senate, these groups showed what they could do. In Chicago, where a tremendous job of organizing support for the bill has been done under the leadership of A. V. C.'s Hugh Will, the Illinois Veterans' Housing Council reported that telegrams went to the Illinois Senators from every veterans' group in the city. Their work paid off when Senator Brooks, long considered on the side of the real-estate lobby, voted a vigorous "nay" to the Cain amendment to strike public housing from the bill.

A big job remains to be done in the House. At this writing the petition to bring the T.-E.-W. bill out on the floor without waiting for action by the House Banking and Currency Committee bears more than 130 signatures. A. V. C. is now asking each member of the House to say whether or not he has signed. If he has not, the united veterans' council in his district will be notified and asked to follow up. Jesse Wolcott, chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee, has been forced to schedule hearings now that the Senate has passed the bill, but any measure he reports to the floor will be as weak as he can make it. He will certainly use his control of the committee to eliminate the public-housing section, which is vitally needed to give balance to the entire program. The veterans are determined to continue their campaign for the discharge petition as the only sure means of getting affirmative House action. They think they will succeed where they have failed in the past, because for the first time they are united.

II. A Plank in a Platform

BY CHARLES ABRAMS

FOURTEEN years after our first public-housing experiment we are no nearer solving the housing problem than when we started. In the years between 1934 and the present we have dashed from one emergency program to another. In 1935 we tore down slums to provide employment, in 1937 to give decent homes to a "third of the nation," in 1940 to build houses for defense. A year later we put up trailers, mudvilles, and makeshifts to house war workers.

Today a whole nation is immobilized by a housing shortage; 45 per cent of the veterans between twenty-one and twenty-four years of age vainly hunt places to live; only 165,000 homes have been built for slum dwellers; and new slums crop up from coast to coast.

What keeps America from alleviating its housing shortage is not a production problem. No one who has studied our war-time records doubts our ability to produce the million and a half houses we need annually if only we are determined to do it. It is not the cost. The maximum expense of a slumless America would be no more for a year than the expense of World War II was for three days.

The reason we have made no progress is our failure to resolve a conflict between ideologies. A major contest has developed for control of public moneys, credits, and powers. Five main groups, each with its own ideas on the social function of government, are seeking to direct the political policy in housing.

The laissez faire advocates. This group consists of those who think the federal government should keep its hands off all social reforms, including housing. They see such reforms as interference with business, a step toward socialism. Europe, they insist, is headed for doom because it has embarked on social security, planning, price control, and social reforms. We too shall fail unless we retrace our steps to the staid individualism of the nineteenth century. The intellectual angels of this group are Hayek and Von Mises, and its spokesman is the N. A. M. Its program for solving the housing problem is to abolish rent controls, lower taxes, get the government out of everything. Private enterprise will then rise to the occasion and build houses for everybody. It vehemently opposes public housing but completely ignores the building and lending lobby that has been campaigning for continued government intervention in housing and is the most serious threat to free enterprise.

CHARLES ABRAMS, housing adviser and columnist of the New York Post, *has been* The Nation's *adviser in the preparation of this issue. Mr. Abrams is author of "The Future of Housing" and "Revolution in Land," and of two pamphlets—" A Housing Program for America" and "Race Bias in Housing" (the last originally appeared as a series of articles in* The Nation). *He was formerly general counsel to the New York City Housing Authority.*

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The paternalists. This group believes in the private-enterprise system but thinks it can be best sustained if the government dispenses some small benefits to those whom private enterprise ignores. Its philosophy recalls that of Bismarck, who believed that the best way to take the wind out of the Social Democrats' sails was to mitigate the evils of capitalism by increasing social-welfare aid. Its formula calls for some public housing, housing research, government aid to private builders in the hope that ultimately the building industry will be rationalized and take care of all income groups. While this group does not regard public housing as socialism, it favors such housing for only about 10 per cent of those needing it. Senator Taft is its most articulate spokesman in the Senate. President Truman is in accord.

The aid-to-business lobby. This group is represented by the building and lending fraternity. It wants federal money to be the great lubricant for business. Government should become business's handmaid, subsidize business undertakings, remove the element of chance from "venturing," and socialize business losses. Money for social reform must be spent through business, which must be guaranteed adequate profits. The masses are to be the residual beneficiaries, if they benefit at all, of the federal expenditures. There must be more government insurance of mortgages at high interest rates, bigger authorizations to help builders venture without investment, expansion of the Home Loan Bank system, additional federal underwriting of building and loan associations. Rent doles to indigent slum dwellers are tolerated, since they would perpetuate slums and be profitable to slum owners. This group's philosophy has been expressed by Herbert U. Nelson, its front man, who says, "In our country we prefer that government activity shall take the form of assisting and aiding private business rather than undertake great public projects of a governmental character."

Socialism-for-the-rich enthusiasts. These are represented by Harold E. Stassen and in the Senate by Joseph R. McCarthy. Mr. Stassen wants the government to build "more units so that those of lower incomes may find units being vacated by those of higher incomes." As for building low-rent housing, he believes that "rent for the indigent should not be intermixed with the necessity of building more housing in America." In short, Stassen wants the government to build 12,600,000 houses and have them sold to the highest bidder instead of reserving them for the lower-income families. These would get the hand-me-downs. He would oppose all subsidized housing. The proposal can best be described as socialism for the rich and private enterprise for the poor.

The general-welfare proponents. This, the least articulate group, believes that decent housing should no longer be a social experiment benefiting a few slum dwellers. It advocates a program to clear all slums in ten or fifteen years, to provide housing for the middle-income group ignored by private enterprise, and to transform our cities into decent places in which to live. It sees no challenge to the private-enterprise system in having government undertake tasks which are unprofitable to private enterprise. It considers such government intervention completely consistent even with the teachings of Adam Smith, who conceded that among the duties of the sovereign state was "that of erecting and maintaining those public institutions and those public works . . . of such a nature that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual." Public housing, it feels, is no more socialistic than post offices or schools.

IF THE issues could be reduced to these simple terms, they could be intelligently debated by Presidential candidates and resolved by the people. But they have been entangled in the tactics of the political battle.

During 1944, with victory in the war in sight, Senator Taft started hearings on his own to find a post-war solu-

The Need and the Remedy

A COMBINATION of forces has brought this nation today to as sorry a housing shortage as it has ever known. The building industry has demonstrated once again its complete inability to meet the nation's needs. There is no alternative now but government action. A national housing program must be established. Its goal should be at least 1,500,000 units a year for the next ten years. To obtain housing for various income groups credit aids must be provided for people in the upper-middle brackets, urban redevelopment for those with small incomes, and public housing for the neediest.

A single agency to coordinate all housing activities must be set up. Federal aid to local governments to assemble and clear land in slum or blighted areas is also a vital part of a housing program. And aid should be provided for rehabilitating existing structures for use as low-rent housing and for building self-supporting rental units for veterans who can pay $30 to $50 a month.

The shortage of housing is so critical today that the pressure to increase rents is terrific. A strong rent-control bill to last at least through the middle of 1950 should be enacted. Controls should be reimposed on property decontrolled in June, 1947, and since. Adequate protection against evictions should be provided.

The need for housing and rent control is grave. The remedy is obvious. If private enterprise will not act, public enterprise must. The Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill recently passed by the Senate and now being considered by the House is a step in the right direction and should be enacted immediately.

PHILIP MURRAY, President, C. I. O.

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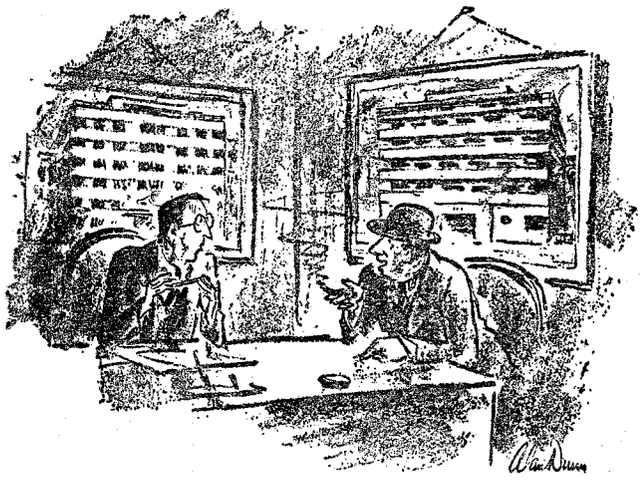

"I want you to design me some old-law tenements; I think I can sell them to the slum-clearance commission at a profit."

tion to the housing problem. Economists at the Federal Reserve Bank, anticipating a post-war slump, felt that slum-clearance operations would again be needed to prime business. The inevitable housing shortage played no part in their calculations.

Senators Wagner and Ellender up to that time had sponsored a continued housing program for the lowest-income group as a welfare measure. However, John B. Blandford, Jr., who had been put in charge of all the housing agencies under a war-time reorganization, saw an opportunity to present a housing bill which would engage all his agencies after the war. This was the birth of the "comprehensive" approach, which embraced the dispensing of government aid to local housing authorities as well as to private builders. It was felt that since federal aid was extended to the private builders, their lobby would now go along with the whole bill, including public housing. The liberals, acting through the National Public Housing Conference, hoped that this would break down the opposition of the House Banking and Currency Committee.

What emerged in place of Taft's proposals on the one hand and the Wagner-Ellender proposals on the other was a combination bill now called the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, or S-866. Here at last, it was felt, was something on which Republicans and Democrats, reformers and building sharks could get together to further the common purpose. The lobby, however, opposed the bill from the start.

For four successive sessions this bill was introduced and reintroduced. Despite its failure, the four years of fighting made the T.-E.-W. bill the goal, symbol, and spearhead of the housing movement. Above all, it was the only bill that now stood a chance of passage, and such measures as the Rabin and Taylor-Douglas bills advocating direct construction could receive no liberal backing lest it divide support for the T.-E.-W. bill.

The bill passed the Senate on April 22. If it passes the House, its main accomplishments will be the following: (1) Cause the public low-rent housing program to be resumed, with the building over the next five years of 500,000 public-housing units. (2) Provide a formula for urban redevelopment under which substandard areas would be acquired by local communities, the costs written down with the aid of grants, and the areas cleared and redeveloped for private or public uses. (3) Set up a program of yield insurance assuring a minimum of 2¾ per cent a year on outstanding investment in order to attract private capital into housing the middle-income group. (4) Authorize additional federal insurance of home-mortgage loans for individual properties and cooperatives. (5) Authorize loans at 4 per cent interest for the building or improvement of farm buildings. (6) Authorize numerous other aids, including more aid to prefabricators and paralyzed veterans.

The main strength of the bill is in its public-housing and urban-redevelopment provisions. Yet the former would be no more than enough to continue public housing as an experiment. And the urban redevelopment authorized is in the nature of a demonstration rather than a full-dress attempt to clear our substandard areas. As for the FHA-insurance provisions, they are not markedly different from past piecemeal efforts to build small homes for those who can afford them. The yield-insurance formula is no more than a doubtful experiment.

Though it is called a "comprehensive" measure, designed to produce 15,000,000 homes in ten years, its benefits will not extend to large families, middle-income families, the bulk of the lowest-income group, the elderly, the single-person family, and numerous others in need of housing. Yet because it may pass, and because of its public-housing and urban-redevelopment provisions, it must be supported as a step in the right direction. But it is no more than a step. With party platforms soon to be drafted, it is time for American liberals to weigh a really comprehensive program, to refuse to be satisfied with the hit-or-miss efforts of the current proposals.

A NEW program is required that will measure up to the public's true needs and be accepted by the public. To the adoption of such a program this issue of *The Nation* is dedicated. It must be sweeping in its aims, specific in its details. It must seek to reshape America through city planning and slum clearance while integrating the living patterns of class, race, age, and income groups. It must try to establish true protection for home owners and encourage housing cooperatives. Above all, it must give a home to the young veteran.

But a truly comprehensive program can never be adopted unless the fundamental conflict between political ideologies is resolved. That conflict arises out of the mistaken notion that every expansion of public housing narrows the sphere of private enterprise. Yet no participant in the building operation—contractor, subcontractor,

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lender, or laborer—is displaced in public housing. All are employed. Only the speculative builder is affected, and even he can find a place in the building operation as the over-all contractor. This is, in fact, the role to which he has descended in all FHA large-scale operations. In these the government allows him the profits without requiring him to risk his own capital.

In a large public-housing program private enterprise would be more active than ever before, for the new building would reach the vast untapped field of the low- and middle-income families. The program would be a boon to private enterprise rather than a threat.

Another political objection is that public agencies might become our biggest landlords. No large program for public housing can ever be put through if it makes the public the landlord of a third or a half of our families. The public-housing program must therefore be modified. We should not try to shrink the sphere of private ownership by extending public ownership but should "desocialize" public ownership as soon as practicable by conveying title to the tenants or at least granting them the greatest measure of control and responsibility.

Government ownership and control are not necessarily part of the public purpose in subsidized housing. Housing differs from education, public utilities, and similar services in which government operation is indispensable to fulfilling the public purpose. The main end of public housing is to clear slums and provide an adequate number of good homes in well-planned neighborhoods within the means of the people displaced. If operation can be handled privately by the tenants, it should be transferred to them. Tenant cooperatives under the supervision of boards of directors made up of housing experts and the tenants themselves should ultimately take over control.

With the adoption of a truly comprehensive housing program, we can have sound homes as well as sound communities. We can check the drain on municipal revenues, stabilize real-estate values for the long run, help to maintain full employment, prevent the foreclosures that periodically threaten our home owners, give our veterans and slum-dwellers and aged decent homes. We can have better cities—planned cities. We can give our people a real and vital stake in democracy.

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III. What You *Can Do*

1. Visit, telephone, write, or wire your Congressman at once. The Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill may be debated in the House or it may be kept from debate. It is up to you to see that it gets its hearing.

2. Write your local newspaper expressing your opinion. See the editor. Have a talk with him about the bill and about housing generally. Does your paper support housing editorially?

3. Organize radio programs for the T.-E.-W. bill and for housing projects in your community.

4. Visit the local political clubs. Your Congressman is sensitive to their views. What is their position on the T.-E.-W. bill? Have they made it known to their Congressman?

5. What is the position of your mayor, governor, and other officials? Ask them. See to it that their opinion is made known to the newspapers and Congressmen of your district.

6. Join the National Public Housing Conference, 1015 Fifteenth Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C., and the local housing organization in your community.

7. Get your labor union to focus on the housing problem, if it has not already done so.

8. Try to arouse an interest in housing in your ministers, priests, and rabbis; in your neighborhood Y. M. C. A.; in your clubs and youth organizations; in your high schools.

9. Learn what the housing fight is all about. Don't imagine that all housing legislation is good legislation. Get a good bibliography on housing from your local housing organization. The N. P. H. C. will keep you informed of all developments. Many documentary films are available.

10. There are slums in your city. Visit them. Find out what the housing authority in your city has or has not been doing.

11. If there is no local housing organization in your community, organize one. If the housing authority in your community is inactive, arouse local sentiment to prod it into action.

12. Find out if your official city-planning agency is awake or asleep. Most are asleep. Has it thought of drawing up a master plan of the city? Has it thought of replanning the city at all? Are dwelling laws being properly enforced? Are the zoning ordinances up to date? Are the building codes modern?

13. Get in touch with the colleges. Are they training people in housing and city planning? Are the courses adequate? What are the facilities for adult education in your community?

14. If you are a veteran, work with your local chapter and national headquarters for better housing.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

AMERICAN "CULTURE" IN SCANDINAVIA

BY HELMUTH GOTTSCHALK

EVEN before the war Scandinavia's political sympathies went out mainly to the great Anglo-Saxon democracies, Britain and America. To be sure, Scandinavia's ties with German science, literature, and the arts were very strong, and this was true even of Denmark, despite bitter memories and recurrent fears of German aggression; but these ties were severed or withered away when cultural life in Nazi Germany degenerated and then disappeared.

The Scandinavians have a closely knit and homogeneous culture, but their outlook is not insulated or provincial. On the contrary, Scandinavia's active contribution to present-day Western culture is too well known to need recounting, and there is eager interest in everything that goes on in the rest of the world. I doubt, for instance, whether even in France itself there has been more passionate discussion of existentialism or more productions of Sartre's plays. Yet Anglo-Saxon influences predominate. English and American authors are almost as well known in Scandinavia as in their own countries. A surprising number of English and American books, including scientific books, have been translated into the Scandinavian languages. English and American plays are well known and popular, the importation of books, especially in cheap editions, and of periodicals is extremely large. And since the United States is the greatest producer of these publications, it provides the lion's share.

The "voice of America"—I do not mean the radio—is widely heard in Scandinavia, so widely indeed that it is beginning to provoke a certain amount of resistance based on both economic and ideological considerations.

The Scandinavian market is after all not unlimited, and the large import of translations naturally competes severely with Scandinavia's own production, not only for readers but also for the available supply of paper. Scandinavian bookshops are filled with piles of American best-sellers, from "Gone with the Wind" to the still more tedious "Forever Amber." Then there is the Scandinavian edition of *Reader's Digest*, which miraculously has managed to secure paper for a very large circulation. Yet the paper allotments for old or new Scandinavian periodicals have been cut to the bone. Scandinavian writers have the greatest difficulty in getting their books published because of the scarcity of paper, and if a first edition does get published and proves a success, there is usually no paper available for further editions. Even the classics—Scandinavian and other—are out of print in spite of the fact that the reading public has been waiting for new editions for years and years. There is paper, however, for "Forever Amber."

The explanation, of course, is that Scandinavian publishers are business men first and as smart as anybody else. Imported mass-produced material, even though it must be translated, is cheaper than the equally bad home product, and the supply is inexhaustible. Imported best-sellers, especially the American ones, receive enormous advance publicity with no expense to the Scandinavian publishers. Hollywood will turn them into movies, *Reader's Digest* may carry a condensation, *Life* may bring a spread of pictures, and the Scandinavian illustrated papers will get pictures and stories from their American agencies. Publishing such a best-seller entails hardly any risk; moreover, since these books are produced on the principle, as far as readers are concerned, of the lowest common denominator, they command a huge market.

And there's the ideological rub. If this imported literature were of Grade A quality one would be ungracious to complain of the competition it offers. But actually of course most of it is Grade B or worse.

It is this fact, for which the Scandinavian importers are just as responsible as the foreign suppliers, that has aroused the resistance of intelligent Scandinavians. Swedish writers and intellectuals have protested in several open discussions against the adulteration of cultural values by this huge importation of cheap material—cheap in both senses of the word. The Norwegians, as always, are the most outspoken in their criticism. There is much discussion of the question in Oslo intellectual circles, and the prevailing opinion is that this particular form of Americanization must be stopped. It is being debated too in Denmark, which is swamped with Grade B culture in the form of films, magazines, books, and even news, which much too often is colored. The Danes are given to moderation and understatement, but the liberal *Politiken* in December published a vigorous editorial under the heading Technicolor Literature, in which it pointed out that while no one has the right to tell the public what to read, there is a very grave question whether low-grade "escape" literature should be allowed to crowd out serious expression. And most of the escape literature is imported.

The great majority of Scandinavian intellectuals are convinced liberals. And even Communist intellectuals will admit that they find the Western atmosphere, with its freedom of discussion and criticism, much more congenial than the stern puritan discipline of the Russians. Scandinavian intellectuals are keenly aware of the struggle going on everywhere between reaction and progress, and they believe rightly that one of reaction's best weapons is low-grade literature and art which avoids all real problems or presents them in false terms. Little wonder, then, that they are dismayed by the fact that Scandinavia has not only its own kitsch to contend with but also the imported variety, with which it is literally swamped. And the imported variety is much more slickly turned out than the domestic product.

What to do? The idea of censorship is abhorrent to Scandinavian intellectuals. The only hope perhaps is that they will find ways of exerting pressure on their own publisher-importers, of making effective their insistence that while they wish to hear the voice of America they wish to hear it at its best.

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Morris Cohen's Philosophy of History

THE MEANING OF HUMAN HISTORY. By Morris R. Cohen. The Open Court Publishing Company. $4.

WHEN the intellectual history of this age is written, and becomes characterized as dominated by John Dewey, the true stature of Morris Cohen will begin to appear. Then it will be seen how fortunate we were to have had a philosopher of Cohen's ability who, although quite as much aware as Dewey of "the indispensable role of the intellect in making possible a life that can fitly be called human," could at the same time, with dignity and wit, remind a generation infatuated with practical and social applications that there exist "physical or cosmic issues" obstinately unamenable to the instrumental theory of value. His gently devastating protest against "ways of getting rich quick in wisdom" is one of the most precious of immigrant contributions to American culture.

Cohen's Carus Lectures, "The Meaning of Human History," posthumously published, were his last charge, but by 1944 he found many more enemies in the field than the "New History" of J. H. Robinson, which had long since merged, with Wilson's New Freedom, into the faded hopes of progressivism. There were now such swaggering bullies as Spengler and the fashionable cyclicalists ("History is full of novelty, of real triumph and real defeat," moralizes Cohen), or the Marxists ("a manifestation of the monistic mania"), or, everywhere and most insidiously, "the narrow-hearted positivistic conception of scientific method." By venturing into the philosophy of history Cohen took on all his opponents at once, both "those who would spin the world out of ideas and those who look to earth, air, fire, and water to explain all human phenomena." Against all these he maintained the deceptively simple thesis that any interpretative concept—geographical factors, economic interest, the morphology of ideas, great men, or the inertia of institutions—must be employed by the humble historian to illuminate a complex of forces "that cannot be reduced to a single factor without intellectual violence." Unfortunately, Cohen muses, history "has not arranged itself to suit the convenience of historians." Few living scholars can face Cohen's statement and honestly pretend that they have lived up to their sacred mission.

To the analysis of meaning in history Cohen brought a superb mastery of logic and a profound understanding of science. It is ironic—and highly characteristic of the man—that by applying these non-humanistic techniques Cohen reaches the conclusion that the historian has not merely permission but actually a more imperative duty to indulge his humanity than any logic-scorning pragmatist or science-contemning humanist has yet been able to imagine. Cohen shows that wherever the historian has failed in breadth, insight, or comprehension, he has not only been weak but has also committed a methodological blunder which is essentially a failure to understand the logical and scientific formulation of his problem.

History, Cohen argues, is not limited to one class of events—Marx and Hegel nothwithstanding—nor does a single event figure in only one dimension of narrative—Toynbee to the contrary. Where the mathematician uses the concrete fact as a springboard for the leap into abstract relations, the historian must take up residence within the fact and cast out lines of relationship in all directions. He must use abstract knowledge "to illumine the individual event in time and place," which setting comprises the whole nexus of social, psychological, organizational concepts. They murder history who stifle it with externally applied schemes, not because the facts refuse to conform but because they do conform. Brutalized lovers never realize that they have killed the thing they love. When it comes, for example, to the problem of cause, it is the beginning of wisdom to see that events do not form a heap of discrete happenings; but to find continuity in too thin a flow is to poison the stream. The word "cause" has a wealth of connotations: "an antecedent led to, gave rise to, brought about, made, produced, created, or influenced a certain consequent, or the latter was due to, resulted from, came as a consequence of, or was conditioned by the former." It is death to the mind and the assassination of history to think of cause as only a push or a compulsion.

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So in every realm of meaning Cohen spells out the logic of multi-dimensionality. The affair of Nelson and Lady Hamilton may be viewed as an instance of the eternal triangle, "or we may consider it in relation to the life of the sailors in the British navy." But in Cohen's severe vision the logic of many dimensions does not mean license to make anything mean everything. On the contrary, it is a discipline all the more austere because, in whatever scheme, the consequences of Nelson's love life "depend not upon the historian but upon what actually happened." Applying the concept of cause is inescapable, but it is, says Cohen, "inherently difficult of attainment." The God of history is a jealous God. Only after we comprehend what must be the gulf between our estimates and the facts do we become mature. When the historian has learned that he does not make the past but that he does make "findings about it," he will understand his awful responsibility; he will no longer be so foolish as to suppose that he tells of events as they actually happened in the eye of God, but neither will he be so naive as to think that he has done all his job by offering a genetic account. The genetic fallacy, Cohen sadly remarks, is the latest form of the old "fallacy of composition." To force history to yield up fewer meanings than it offers is to exploit it, no matter in what seemingly noble or scholarly interest, and the multiple nature of Cohen's method aims at preserving the ultimate simplicity. The past is not at the mercy of profiteers, ideological or sentimental.

I think it not too fantastic to say, if one does not over-say it, that in Morris Cohen a deep, Old Testament piety became articulate in America. What is man that God should be mindful of him? And yet Yahveh, however fitfully, has been mindful of him, at least to the extent of having in the beginning, perhaps through inadvertence, perhaps out of curiosity to see what would happen, created man in the image of God. One consequence is that man cannot, as long as he is man, abdicate the application of human intelligence to the interpretation of human history. Again and again he tries to abdicate, and the wages of sin is death. Sincere souls embrace communism as a protest against inequality but end by justifying the necessities of the Soviet Union: "In the process the sensitivity of the human conscience to issues of justice almost imperceptibly melts away." Far from leading to relativity and skepticism, Cohen's historical method comes at last to an ethical resolution all the more firmly based because it can define precisely the point at which interpretations that profess to exclude ethics "actually smuggle in uncritical ethical judgments," or can expose the hypocrisy of ethical interpretations that are in fact masquerades of vanity. It is to be hoped—probably in vain—that some of the many who on all sides are selling their historical inheritance for a mess of ideological pottage may stumble upon this book and turn back before the cheat has undone them.

PERRY MILLER

That Woman

APPOINTMENT ON THE HILL. By Dorothy Detzer. Henry Holt and Company. $3.

DOROTHY DETZER has been a lobbyist since 1925. Her activities as executive secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom have taken her to many strange places, strangest of all, perhaps, the stuffy environs of our State Department. I recommend this book especially to one who has struggled through the dull memoirs of Cordell Hull. The career of the ex-Secretary has been built up into an American myth, with Mr. Hull adding the final touches. One of the high points of the Hull memoirs is his impassioned denunciation of the investigation of the munitions inquiry conducted by Senator Nye in 1933 to look into the damning evidence against the "merchants of death" collected by Stephen Raushenbush and a topside group of researchers.

Mr. Hull now complains that what Miss Detzer describes as the "intelligent and important service rendered to the American people" by the Nye committee resulted in embarrassing his department, and he roundly denounces both Nye and Raushenbush for digging up the truth about the "bloody traffic." But according to Miss Detzer, whose organization set the investigation in train, Hull, in 1933, "for an hour sat and twirled his glasses and talked colorfully of 'those . . . munition pirates,' 'those dirty . . . brigands.'" After Miss Detzer's visit the State Department officially blessed the investigation. Later when the committee had dug up "a sordid record of intrigues and bribery; of collusion and excessive profits; of war scares artificially fostered and conferences deliberately wrecked," the State Department was "embarrassed."

A number of others will be embarrassed by Miss Detzer's outspoken book, which has in it more behind-the-scenes

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stuff than is contained in the spate of official memoirs and apologia now pouring from the presses. The double-crossing of the Spanish Loyalists, the un-American activities of the navy lobbyists, the real origins of the Marshall Plan, the hard-boiled attitude of our officialdom toward slave labor and hard-pressed refugees—all are in this timely book, written with the vigor and charm that make Miss Detzer so effective a lobbyist for human decencies.

Miss Detzer's courage, patience, and integrity, and her intimate knowledge of the political scene illuminate the pages of "Appointment on the Hill," No wonder the lobbyists for special privilege get panicky when they see "that woman" talking to a bemused Congressman or a soon-to-be embarrassed Under Secretary. For behind her is, in the words of Victor Hugo, "one power mightier than armies, and that is an idea when its time has come." Her faith in the idea that the time for international peace has come should convince the most skeptical reader that Miss Detzer's career, far from being a "failure"—as an anonymous character in her last chapter assured her that it had been—is one of the most notable successes of our tragic days.

MC ALISTER COLEMAN

Misuse of Reason

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF MAN. By Paul Roubiczek. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

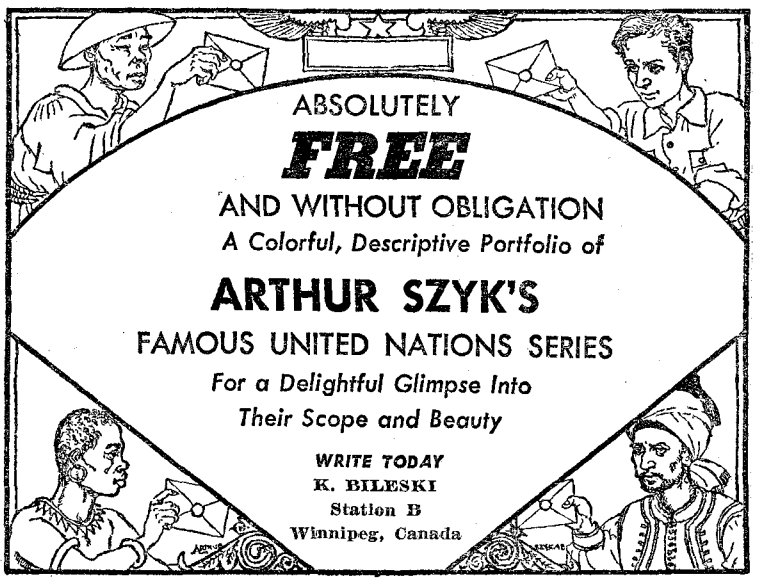
THE clue to Mr. Roubiczek's thesis lies in the title of his work, "The Misinterpretation of Man," the implication being that the author has the correct interpretation. This is a religious interpretation, and the conclusion he draws is that man's only way out of the present impasse—which he attributes to the dominance, and the inadequacy for our time, of certain nineteenth-century ideas—lies in a revivified Christianity.

From the start Mr. Roubiczek allows his preconceptions not only to select for him particular thinkers who fit his thesis but also to distort the content of each analysis. The thinkers chosen—Kant, Goethe, the German romantics, Nietzsche, Hegel, Marx, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the man of action representative of the cult of heroism, Napoleon—are clay to his theological hands. We are given no substantial reason why another set—for example, Kierkegaard, Comte, Renan, J. S. Mill, and Bismarck—might not just as well have been used. In his treatment of Kant Mr. Roubiczek conveniently overlooks the sage of Königsberg's personal cowardice vis-à-vis Prussian authority. This allows him to give the impression that Kant's life was unblemished and that his last years of physical helplessness were due to the internal contradictions of his philosophy in its disregard of the importance of emotion. This same procedure, the refutation of ideas by reference to the personal failing of the thinker, is also used in respect to Tolstoy. Yet in his first chapter the author says, "We are concerned exclusively with the relation of ideas to life in general, and with their teaching for us. It should not be necessary to mention that we do not intend in discussing the representatives of these ideas to apportion praise or blame." His use of an *ad hominem* argument to demolish ideas—against his own explicit professions—is inadmissible. It cuts the ground from under any analysis of ideas.

Mr. Roubiczek is evidently representative of a general trend in contemporary thought which rejects the provisional character of rational analysis for a theological absolutism. Working under the half-truth that reason is fallible and conditioned by extra-rational factors, this school throws away the only tool which can unite men of varying backgrounds. A common method recognized by all gives the measure of objectivity necessary in a world where private whims are too often hypostasized into metaphysics.

It is perhaps unjust to take Mr. Roubiczek to task from a point of view which he does not regard as valid; but to stay within his perspective is to allow anything he states to pass as viable. However, since he does give a subordinate role to the function of reason, his misuse of it is evident even within his own scheme. It is amazing that he should have chosen Goethe as an example of the full flowering of personality; for the Weimar Olympian is perhaps the most striking of modern pagans. To prove the disasters of the cult of heroism, Napoleon is presented as a virtuoso who never experienced uncertainty, but whose inhuman goals brought his own undoing. The author passes over the fact that at the crucial point of his coup d'état in 1799 Bonaparte lost his nerve, and if it had not been for the resourcefulness of his brother Lucien, the coup would have failed.

The most glaring distortion to which Mr. Roubiczek succumbs is in his treatment of the German romantics. Since the burden of his polemic is against rationalism, he transforms Novalis, Schlegel, Schelling, and Schleirmacher into radical rationalists, though they stand as forerunners of modern anti-intellectualism to whom Mr. Roubiczek is himself indebted. The author prefers the type of Christianity that stresses the agony of the crucifixion rather than the romantic brand. That Dostoevsky is taken not only as the proper Christian prophet but also as a social philosopher is not sur-



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prising. The acuteness of Dostoevsky's devastating criticism of the superficialities of nineteenth-century rationalistic optimism is something from which we may all learn, but to take him as political theorist for a new society is to court disaster. Mr. Roubiczek declares himself a Socialist, but a socialism looking toward Dostoevsky as mentor would be much nearer to clerical fascism.

When not under the spell of his theology the author reveals considerable insight. Both Hegelianism and Marxism receive a balanced treatment. It is unfortunate, however, that he did not take his strictures against Hegel to heart, for, as he says, "The desire to bring about a certain situation . . . is strengthened and made to appear inevitable by a seemingly scientific method. Every interpretation of his becomes, consciously or unconsciously, the weapon of a non-scientific tendency." J. F. WOLPERT

CONTRIBUTORS

HELMUTH GOTTSCHALK, a refugee from Hitler's Germany, teaches in the University of Copenhagen. He has recently been in the United States as correspondent for *Politiken*.

PERRY MILLER, professor of history at Harvard University, is the author of "The New England Mind."

J. T. WOLPERT is a member of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Buffalo.

Art

CLEMENT GREENBERG

THE Japanese-born Yasuo Kuniyoshi has over the last three decades been one of the most prominent of the American assimilators of French post-impressionist art, especially that phase of it embodied in the painting of Derain, Segonzac, and Vlaminck. This may turn out, however, to be the sole substance of his claim to be remembered. For Kuniyoshi's retrospective show at the Whitney Museum revealed him as a much weaker artist than one had expected—one, certainly, not in the class of such other notable assimilators as Hartley, Maurer, and even Max Weber.

It is true that Kuniyoshi never struck one as an independent force, but it was assumed that he had real personal and painterly qualities and a sure command of his craft. It is exactly in these respects that the present show undeceives us; what we see instead is the pretension to these virtues, the vivid semblance but not the genuine reality of paint quality, sensibility, lyricism. Again and again Kuniyoshi makes mistakes no painter with a true control of his craft could make so often. Muddiness, as the result of the crowding of tones or their insensitive juxtaposition just at the points where the design is most concentrated, ruins otherwise well-fashioned canvases: thus, for example, the "Accordion and Horse" of 1938, the "Room 110" of 1944, the "Abandoned Treasures" of 1945-46, and the "Headless Horse" of 1945. It is hard to understand how a painter who seems to realize, as Kuniyoshi does, the advantages and disadvantages of working in earth colors can let himself be so sloppy in his handling of dark and light values, which are the all-important consideration in such a style. In many of his still lifes and figure pieces, where a form or a group of forms is dramatically centered against an empty, and usually well-painted, background, the tones clot and become dull and blank exactly inside those forms —and almost nowhere else. It would appear that a lack of genuine assurance, a distrust of his own sensibility, compels the artist to tighten up and press too hard precisely where the success of the picture hangs in the balance.

While it may be that this show was not as well chosen as it could have been, such mistakes and hesitations are too frequent not to be integral to his art. Here, one feels entitled to say, is the price an artist pays who, for all his gifts, lacks enterprise and courage. The very urgency of his own talent frightens Kuniyoshi and, in order to fend off that urgency and stay within the proved public success of his manner, he must freeze up. Kuniyoshi is a success; he is considered one of our most eminent artists; he has received a Whitney show in his own lifetime; he has won a lot of prizes. But because he has played it so safe, because he has denied his own spontaneity, he fails—and fails mechanically—even on his own terms.

Kuniyoshi hardly matters to serious painting in America. Even the nice pic-

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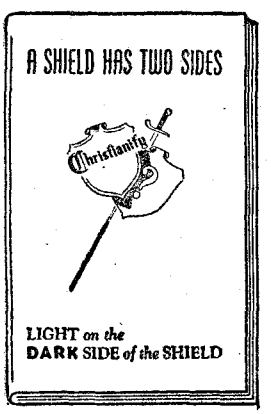

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tures in this show hardly matter. And there are some nice ones, particularly the "Bouquet and Stove" of 1929 and the "Milk Train" of 1940. And the "Wild Horses" of 1921, the "Flowers in Black Vase" of 1925, the "Picketing a Horse" of 1937, and the "End of Juanita" of 1942 are also nice. But, except perhaps for "Bouquet and Stove," they are all only nice pictures.

Lloyd Goodrich of the Whitney's staff has written a clear and informative text for the catalogue of the show. I think however, that he overrates Kuniyoshi's academically facile drawings in relation to his paintings. Facility is not, despite their derivative and ready-made manner, the vice the paintings succumb to.

If the reader is interested in seeing American painting, of approximately the same "period" as Kuniyoshi's, that matters, I would advise him to visit the late Arnold Friedman's memorial show at the Marquié Gallery (through May 29). Friedman was a belated impressionist whose absolute sincerity and matter-of-fact courage enabled him to extract a few last important variations from that tradition. These variations matter not only to contemporary American painting but to contemporary painting in general.

Drama

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FERENC MOLNAR'S impudent farce-comedy, "The Play's the Thing" was first seen here in 1926. Gilbert Miller, its original producer, has just revived it with every prospect of brilliant success at the Booth Theater, and there are morals aplenty to be deduced from these various facts. Its most ardent admirers never claimed for it importance of any possible sort, but it is just as fresh and just as funny as it was twenty-two years ago. I remember that on the previous occasion I was somewhere near hysteria during the preposterous scene in which the unfortunate actor struggles with all the French names written into his part by a vengeful playwright, and despite the fact that I have read the play several times since, I found myself again reduced to the same helpless state. If that proves me simple-minded as well as frivolous I am sorry, but the fact must be confessed.

In all its externals "The Play's the Thing" is what we used to call, in the days of American innocence, "Continental." That means, of course, that its principal characters are impossibly successful boulevardiers; that everybody dresses, eats, and scintillates with luxurious abandon; and that nights with beautiful actresses are to be had for the asking. But though most plays of that sort seem pretty faded by now, this one is saved by the fact that it is a satire on itself and that the author—who has shown in other works that he can be sentimental enough on occasion—keeps his tongue firmly planted in his cheek. From its tricky introduction to its neat conclusion the play is never anything but a self-conscious demonstration of one special kind of virtuosity, and its success is doubly remarkable in view of the fact that its author seems to violate one of the most elementary of rules. No man in his right mind ever introduces an anecdote by saying that he has just heard the funniest story in the world and that you are going to laugh your head off. Human nature being what it is, the result of such a tactical error is pretty sure to be the glum if unexpressed comment, "So that is the sort of thing you think amusing." Yet Molnar dares to do what is exactly parallel. He takes advantage of his tricky form to call repeated attention to his dexterity and, in fact, several times stops the action to say, "This next turn is going to be even more ingenious than you think." But the audience, instead of resenting the complacency, agrees with the author's own estimate of himself and shouts "Bravo!" Only a brave man would take the risk, and only a really skilful one would survive it.

Mr. Miller certainly deserves his share of credit for having produced the revival as carefully as he produced the play originally. Louis Calhern as the playwright, Ernest Cossart as his less scintillating collaborator, Francis Compton as the inevitable butler, and Arthur Margetson as the unfortunate actor who is compelled to ridicule himself in order to save young romance seem, so far as my memory holds, to compare very favorably with the players who did these parts when the piece was new. Moreover, Faye Emerson, as the too at-

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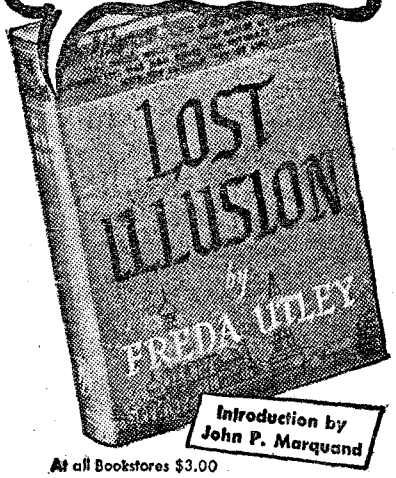

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tractive prima donna, is not only a very good-looking young woman but one who shows a good deal more promise than we are accustomed to find in movie stars translated to the stage. I assume, moreover, that P. G. Wodehouse deserves considerable credit for his adaptation and may, for all I know, be chiefly responsible for the butler who answers the solicitous question, "When *do* you sleep?" with a resigned, "In the winter time, sir," and who is certainly closely related to Jeeves. But there is no taking the chief credit from the play itself, which in my opinion is worth at least ten of the more famous "Liliom."

Perhaps the most important moral to be drawn is simply that if there is one thing as durable as truth it is absolute artificiality. "The Play's the Thing" does not fade or wither because, in one sense, it was never alive. One touch of sentiment, one moment of sincerity, one little attempt to tell some truth, and it would have been by now either stale or rancid, as most of the plays of Noel Coward are stale or rancid for the simple reason that Mr. Coward is so seldom content with cleverness, can so rarely resist the temptation to offer us a glimpse into the suffering hearts of his puppets or just to hint at the serious intention which he hopes he has. Sincerity, unless it is great and genuine, works like an enzyme which leads to fermentation and decay, but Molnar's artifice is sterilely pure. For a similar reason Mr. Behrman's "The Second Man" is still fresh, while such more serious comedies as "Rain from Heaven" would seem already hopelessly out of date should anyone undertake to revive them; and the truth probably is that there is always time for comedy—or farce—if only the author can bring himself to realize the fact. A condemned man might possibly spend his last night on earth reading "Hamlet" or watching an exhibition of prestidigitation. He would not, I think, have much patience with a merely earnest play.

Music

B. H. HAGGIN

THE works of Balanchine that Ballet Society presented during the past season were new manifestations of the powers which make him, for me, the greatest living creative artist. Most obviously, of course, the powers in relation to his own medium, which astound and delight one in each new work with their further transformation and enriching elaboration of the familiar elements of his distinctive vocabulary, and with their inexhaustively inventive use of that vocabulary in sequences that are exciting in their rhythmic impetus and accent, their emotional connotations, their strokes of fantasy and wit. But in addition, as one tries to account for what is new in each work one realizes that it is related to what is different in the vocabulary, the style, the texture, the rhythmic flow, the emotional connotations of the particular piece of music by Mozart ("Sinfonie Concertante") or Bizet ("Symphony in C") or Haieff ("Divertimento") or Hindemith ("The Four Temperaments")—in other words, that it represents the operation of extraordinary powers in relation to music. And when one comes to works like "The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne" (with music by Rieti and scenery and costumes by Cagli) or "Orpheus" (with music by Stravinsky and scenery and costumes by Noguchi) one recognizes the operation of equal powers in relation to drama and its realization in the theater. In the case of "Orpheus" I would say that Balanchine's powers are such as to enable him not only to profit by one of Stravinsky's most masterly dramatic

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scores but to overcome the handicap of an intrusively alien extremism and preciousness in the scenery and costumes.

The works showed another power of Balanchine—his ability to use the personal style of each dancer and what the dancer does best, whether it is Maria Tallchief's dazzling speed, accuracy, and clarity, or Tanaquil LeClerq's exquisite suppleness and delicacy, or Francisco Moncion's superb presence and style and gift for pantomime, or Herbert Bliss's sensitiveness. These were outstanding members of the company of graduates and students of the School of American Ballet who performed the works so beautifully (testifying, incidentally, to Balanchine's powers as a teacher, both in the school and in rehearsals)—a company which included such excellent dancers as Beatrice Tompkins, Gisella Caccialanza, and Elise Reiman, among the female soloists, and Todd Bolender, among the male. What the company lacked was a brilliant male virtuoso as a partner for Tallchief: Magallanes performed the difficult feats he was given to do—but not with brilliance. His one impressive performance was his Orpheus.

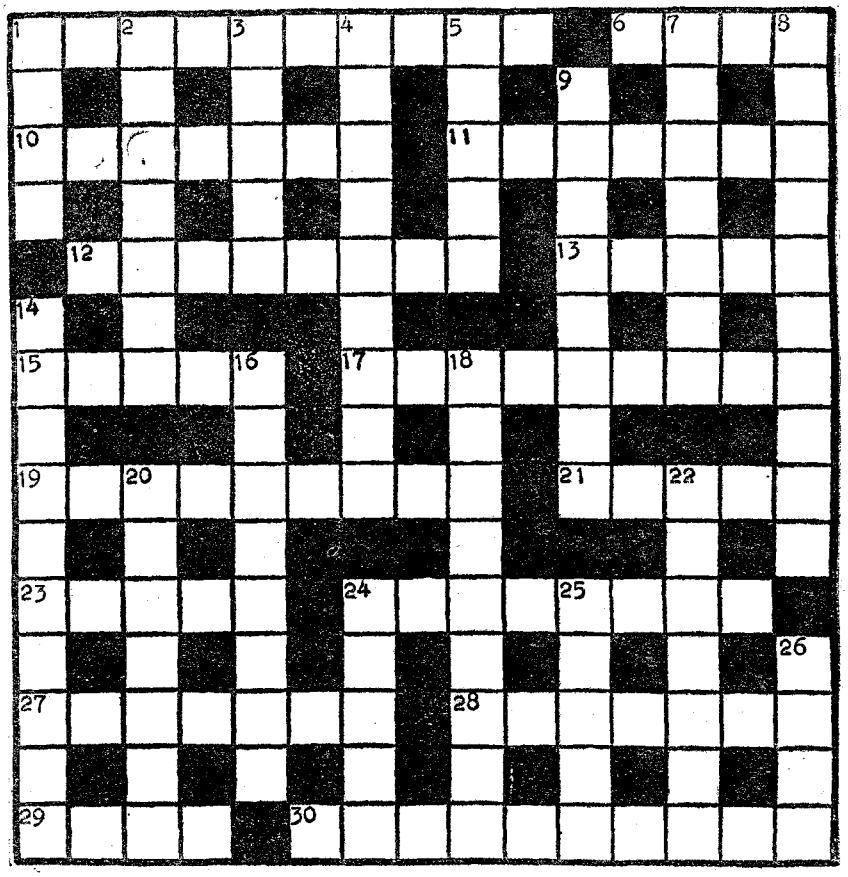
One thing, finally, which contributed to the effectiveness of the productions was the excellent playing of the music under the direction of Leon Barzin.

Menotti's music for "Amelia Goes to the Ball" is his usual facile reworking of the styles he has heard, which carries the action of a play that was amusing as sung and acted by Frances Yeend, Walter Cassel, William Horne, and Gean Greenwell at New York's City Center. In "The Old Maid and the Thief," originally written for radio performance, scrappier music carries a more extravagantly farcical play, which was put over uproariously by Marie Powers, Virginia MacWatters, Ellen Faull, and Norman Young.

Veterans like Beatrice Lillie and Jack Haley manage to be funny even with the material they are given to work with in "Inside U. S. A.," but not as funny as they would be with better material. Herb Shriner's routine, for which he provides his own material, is amusing; the rest—songs, dances, sketches—I found unentertaining.

Crossword Puzzle No. 262

BY FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Correct uniform for a soldier? (5, 5)
6 A strikebreaker is a sore spot to some. (4)
10 My French chief is a king. (7)
11 His life was not his own. (7)
12 Tapes are sort of harsh. (8)
13 Ulysses' wife has no pen to run off with. (5)
15 In India, like our uncle. (5)
17 Gable, for example, takes meals here. (9)
19 The other side of 17, with a folded sheet. (9)
21 Sidles. (5)
23 Is this why an explosive man has to knock? (5)
24 The husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the two of them are healthy. (8)
27 Color an international conference with this. (7)
28 A superior for a helper? (7)
29 Of 90 degrees it's one. (4)
30 What makes the Arab red? (10)

DOWN

1 An inclination to pass from story to story. (4)
2 It begins in the beginning. (7)
3 Great shield. (5)
4 Always takes place before showtime. (9)
5 Black. (5)
7 Find romance where violins came from. (7)
8 Stuff and nonsense! (10)
9 Bless me! A change would be meet! (8)
14 They often put in a ringer to play at these places. (10)
16 Not primarily concerned with either heating or choking the car. (8)
18 It takes a turn in the army to show how gas masks might be worn. (5, 4)
20 A cross over this means you've reached a decision. (7)
22 Looks like a holiday afternoon party for Pygmalion's friend. (7)
24 There's an assassin in the kiosk. (5)
25 In France he separates to get married. (5)
26 This is near an old musician. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 261

ACROSS:—1 APOLLO BELVEDERE; 9 SKINTIGHT; 10 CAPER; 11 LEGEND; 12 and 1 down AS SMOOTH AS SILK; 14 PECULIAR; 16 UNION; 17 BERET; 18 CONSIGNS; 20 CRYSTALS; 21 MADCAP; 24 LLANO; 25 TRADITION; 26 COLDSTREAM GUARD.

DOWN:—2 OWING; 3 LATIN QUOTATIONS; 4 BUGS; 5 LATE SPRING; 6 EXCOMMUNICATING; 7 EXPLOSION; 8 EARTHEN; 13 CIRCULATOR; 17 BUCOLIC; 19 OPINED; 22 CHINA; 23 HAHA.

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Letters to the Editors

Hail to the Chief

Dear Sirs: We have sent the following telegram today to Eugene Connor, the police chief of Birmingham, Alabama, who arrested Senator Glen Taylor for violating local Jim Crow ordinances:

Please accept our congratulations on the help you have just given to the Wallace third-party movement and Soviet foreign policy. Your disgraceful arrest of Senator Taylor forces opponents of Wallace like ourselves to support Taylor 100 per cent in his challenge to your city's barbarous and unjust racial practices, although we know that he is exploiting this issue for political aims we find abhorrent. If Senator Taylor becomes Vice-President (God forbid), it will be largely because of such episodes as his arrest in Birmingham on the charge of passing through a doorway consecrated to persons of another color.

WILLIAM BARRETT, NICOLA CHIARMONTE, SIDNEY HOOK, ELIZABETH HARDWICK, MARY MCCARTHY, PAOLO MILANO, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, PHILIP RAHV, ISAAC ROSENFELD, DELMORE SCHWARTZ, NICCOLO TUCCI, BERTRAM D. WOLFE, VIDA GINSBURG, DWIGHT MACDONALD, ALFRED KAZIN

New York, May 5

Two More Exchanges

Dear Sirs: I have a letter from Mr. Ernest S. Napier of London, England, asking if I know of any *Nation* subscriber who would like to exchange copies of that magazine for the *Tribune*, an English Socialist weekly, similar to the *New Statesman and Nation*, but a little more popular in tone. If you know anyone who would be interested, he could write directly to Mr. Napier, at 9 Abinger Road, Bedford Park, W. 4, London, England.

AUGUSTA ROBINSON

Minneapolis, April 29

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